HOW TO THINK ABOUT WAR

An Ancient Guide to Foreign Policy

Fig. 1: Pericles, maker of war and speeches

Thucydides

Selected, translated, and introduced by Johanna Hanink

HOW TO THINK ABOUT WAR

ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN READERS

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HOW TO THINK ABOUT WAR

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An Ancient Guide to Foreign Policy

Thucydides

Speeches from
The History of the Peloponnesian War

Selected, Translated, and Introduced
by Johanna Hanink

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
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I fear our own mistakes more than the enemy's schemes.

—Pericles to the Athenian Assembly in 431 BCE. Thucydides, *History of The Peloponnesian War* 1.144

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PREFACE

New editions of speeches from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* used to run in high supply, but it has now been decades since such a volume appeared in English. Among the last was the 1973 *Speeches of Thucydides* edited by H.F. Harding, who hardly concealed his conviction that the downfall of Athens had acquired portentous relevance in the era of the Vietnam War. In recent years, Thucydides has nevertheless made a number of fresh appearances on the public stage. Senior political officials are once again intimating that they take cues from his work, while Graham Allison's notion of the "Thucydides trap" has been met with considerable fanfare (and criticism). That "trap," according to Allison, a Harvard political scientist, is an international relations principle which

dictates that war is inevitable when a rising power threatens the priority of a ruling one (that is, Athens and China in the first instance; Sparta and the U.S. in the second). In 2017, when his *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* landed on bookshelves, Allison was invited to the White House to brief the U.S. National Security Council on his—and Thucydides'—ideas.

It is perhaps little surprise that Thucydides has come to seem timely again in the current political moment, with its intensified preoccupations over misuse of language and alternate versions of truth and history, anxieties over shifts in the global order, and fears at the prospects of new foreign conflicts. As the stability of democracy and democratic institutions is put ever more to the test, now may also be an opportune time for reevaluating the idealized legacy of the classical Athenians—those revered

forefathers of Western democracy—on the basis of their own words. The Athenian speeches rendered by Thucydides may well be dazzling for their displays of rhetoric, but it is easy to forget that the deliberations held in the framework of Athens' renowned and radical democracy resulted in policies that led to the loss of innumerable lives and to the collapse of Athens' empire after little more than a half century.

When Rob Tempio approached me about contributing a volume on Thucydides to Princeton University Press's Ancient Wisdom series, I asked him whether I might do so in an unusual way. I wanted to select speeches from Thucydides that illustrated the "ancient wisdom" of their author—his sophistication of thought, elegance of language, and mastery of drama and pacing. Equally, though, I wanted to acknowledge the disastrous courses of action that Athens pursued at the time, despite the city's renown for

the rhetorical and deliberative culture epitomized in those very speeches. I am immensely grateful to Rob for being so open to my taking that approach and for offering such helpful guidance along the way. I also wish to thank Edith Foster, Neville Morley, and the two readers for the Press, from whose comments and corrections I benefited greatly, as well as Christopher Ell, who painstakingly reviewed the translations here. Chris has been an enthusiastic and insightful interlocutor about the finer points of Thucydides' notoriously challenging Greek.

This book is dedicated to Professor H.D. Cameron. Professor Cameron was the first to introduce me to Thucydides and to show me—along with thousands of other University of Michigan freshmen over the course of many decades—just why the "Great Books" are worthy of the name.

Map 1. The Athenian Empire

Map 2. Greece and the Greek West

INTRODUCTION

On August 11, 1777, John Adams, then a delegate to the Second Continental Congress in session in Philadelphia, wrote a letter to his ten-year-old son, John Quincy. In light of the ongoing War of Independence and with a mind to other wars and "Councils and Negotiations" that the future might hold for the boy, Adams urged him "to turn your Thoughts early to such Studies, as will afford you the most solid Instruction and Improvement for the Part which may be allotted you to act on the Stage of Life." He gave one recommendation in particular: "There is no History, perhaps, better adapted to this usefull Purpose than that of Thucidides." For Adams, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* contained within it insight of every possible "usefull" sort: "You will find it

full of Instruction to the Orator, the Statesman, the General, as well as to the Historian and the Philosopher."[1]

For centuries, Thucydides has been made to wear each of those very hats. Politicians and military personnel, historians, political scientists, and classicists have all laid claim, often in radically different ways, to his work and wisdom. Today, the *History* enjoys a status—in university curricula, among political theorists, and in military and policy communities—as a foundational source for theorizations of democracy, international relations, war, and human and state behavior. Thucydides himself might not be disappointed to know this, for toward the beginning of his *History* he announces that he has composed his work with future ages in mind:

> Perhaps the lack of fantastical material here will seem charmless to my audiences.

> Nevertheless, I will be content if anyone who desires to gain a clear understanding of past events, and of future events that will one day resemble the past more or less closely—human nature being what it is—finds my work useful. This work was composed to be a possession for all time and not as a showpiece to be heard for a fleeting moment. (1.22)

Of course, not everyone agrees with what Thucydides implies about the universalism of "human nature," a common translation for his substantive adjective *anthrōpinon* (which covers the range of human things—thoughts, behaviors, affairs, and so on; some translators prefer "human condition"). Nevertheless, ever since Thomas Hobbes published his 1629 translation of the *History*, the first English translation prepared from the Greek, Thucydides has continued

to cast a long shadow over Western political thought. Today, he is even more a staple of the political science than the history classroom, his *History* as often the subject of dissertations in international relations as in Classics.

Modern readings of Thucydides often shine the spotlight on the speeches that he attributes to his work's "characters." Those passages are especially rich in abstract reflections on war, human behavior, and what today we call political theory. It is also undoubtedly "in the speeches that much of the most explicit analysis of the nature of Athenian imperialism appears."[2] These speeches are, however, difficult to find collected together outside of translations of Thucydides' long, dense, and difficult *History* in its entirety. This volume seeks to make the speeches more accessible by presenting them together, in a new translation that is faithful to the Greek but which also aims to be fresh and approachable.

Here readers will find all of the speeches delivered before the Athenian Assembly ("On Justifying a War: Pericles' First War Speech"; "On Holding the Course: Pericles' Last Speech"; "On Realpolitik: The Mytilenean Debate"; and "On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate"), as well as the two best-known passages of the *History* as a whole: Pericles' funeral oration ("On Dying for Your Country: Pericles' Funeral Oration") and the Melian Dialogue ("On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue").

The remainder of this introduction provides an orientation to the speeches, their author, his work, and his times; the last section will briefly discuss Thucydides' "Athenian thesis" and exceptional status in American political thought. This background is, however, simply intended to facilitate—and not to direct—analysis, appreciation, and critique of the speeches and the ideas that they develop.

The Rise of the Athenian Empire

Each of the speeches in this volume contains remarks upon the origins, validity, and character of the Athenian Empire, the very thing that the Athenians gambled when they voted to enter into war with Sparta. Any potted history of the rise of that empire would, however, be misleading, for the ancient sources—Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, and other authors (including tragic and comic playwrights), along with inscriptions, buildings, artworks, and other material evidence—tell a rich but incomplete and sometimes contradictory story. Most of the surviving ancient evidence originates with Athens and Athenians, and already in classical antiquity some people were aggravated by the triumphalist "Athenian history of Athens."[3] Despite the impossibility of tracing a straightforward or objective picture, it will be useful to

approach the speeches with a general outline of Athens' rise to power in mind. The narrative that follows is based largely on Thucydides' own account in the first book of his *History*, in part because it is a primary source of our evidence, but also because its particular contours are programmatic for the rest of Thucydides' work. (References are to passages from the *History* unless otherwise indicated.)

Stirrings of Athens' expansionist ambitions can be detected just after the reforms of Cleisthenes in ca. 508, which established the basic structures and institutions of Athenian democracy. After a military victory on the nearby island of Euboea in 506, the Athenians sent settlers there to establish the city's first cleruchy—a kind of colony whose settlers owned the land but retained their Athenian citizenship—in the town of Chalcis. At the time, Athens was still politically insignificant;

in his *Histories* (late 5th century BCE), Herodotus recounts that when, in the first years of the fifth century, Athenian forces came to aid the coastal Ionian cities rebelling from Persian rule (the Athenians ethnically identified as Ionians), the Persian king Darius had to ask just who they were (Hdt. 5.150). Regardless of its historicity, the anecdote suggests that Athens' subsequent rise was perceived as rapid.

True Athenian hegemony in the Aegean region seems to have originated in the immediate aftermath of the two failed Persian invasions of Greece; the first dispatched by King Darius, the second led by his son Xerxes. Decisive Greek victories in the summer of 479 at the battles of Plataea (in the Greek mainland region of Boeotia) and Mycale (on the west coast of Asia Minor, opposite the island of Samos) effectively ended the second Persian invasion of

Greece, secured the liberation of the Greek Ionian cities, and turned the tide of war in the Greek coalition's favor. That coalition, the Hellenic Alliance, had been forged at a summit in Corinth three years earlier, just before Xerxes launched his attack on Greece.

Following the victory at Mycale, the Spartans returned home while the Athenians and other alliance members continued to engage the Persians. In Athens, work also began on rebuilding the city, which Xerxes and his forces had destroyed shortly after their victory in the 480 Battle of Thermopylae. Despite the Spartans' protestations, the Athenians rapidly reconstructed and expanded their city walls and finished fortifying the port of Piraeus. Thucydides ascribes these initiatives to the general Themistocles, the architect of the Greek victory at Salamis, who "helped to begin

establishing the empire" by encouraging his compatriots to continue investing in their newfound naval supremacy (1.93).

In 478, the Spartans sent the general Pausanias, who had led the Greeks to victory at Plataea, to command the still-united Greek forces in attacks on Cyprus and Byzantium, a city on the site of modern-day Istanbul. Pausanias came under suspicion of Persian sympathies and, according to Thucydides, lost favor with the Ionian Greeks "because he was violent." Just when the allies had asked Athens to assume leadership, Pausanias was recalled to Sparta to be investigated "for acting more like a tyrant than a general." The Spartans dispatched another commander to replace him, but when he arrived he found that the Athenians had already taken charge. Thucydides explains that, at that point, the Spartans were content simply to return home, as they desired "to be done with the

war against Persia and thought that the Athenians were perfectly fit to take charge and were at that moment on good terms with them" (1.95).

According to Thucydides, the Athenians were thus "invested with hegemony by the free will of the allies." This was the birth of what is now commonly known as the Delian League, a modern term for what was initially a confederation led by Athens. In administering the alliance, the Athenians instituted the office of the ten "Treasurers of Hellas," who were to collect tribute from the allies to fund the league's charter purpose of "avenging what they had suffered by laying waste to the lands of the King" of Persia (1.96). These monies were, at first, kept on the island of Delos, an Ionian sanctuary dedicated to the god Apollo, where the league's meetings were held. Certain island powers (Chios, Lesbos, and Samos) contributed ships in lieu of monetary tribute.

Within a decade or so, the alliance counted some two hundred members; that number would eventually increase by half. Under the leadership of Cimon, an Athenian general and statesman, the league became increasingly aggressive in pursuing its founding aim of attacking the Persians. Supported by their allies, the Athenians gained full command of the Aegean Sea. Yet as Athenian power consolidated, resentment brewed among other members of the league. The allies might have entered of their own free will into a coalition with Athens but leaving was now another matter. When the islands of Naxos and Thasos attempted to break free in the 460s, Athens violently suppressed the revolts—and set a precedent for the approach that it would take toward its "allies" over the following decades (1.98–101).

Athenian expansionism provoked the resentment of Sparta, and Thucydides records that a

Spartan plan to invade Attica was foiled only by a major earthquake in 464 (1.101). That earthquake in turn sparked a revolt of Sparta's serf population, the Helots, and when Sparta snubbed Athenian offers of assistance in putting down the revolt, tensions began to come to a head. By 460, Athens and its allies had entered into war with Sparta and the Peloponnesian League, an alliance that dated to the previous century. During the campaigns of this, the First Peloponnesian War (460–446), the Athenians continued to maneuver against Persia in distant theaters, particularly Egypt, where they had been asked to aid the Egyptians in a revolt from the Persian Empire. The Persians, however, managed to quell that revolt and destroy most of the Athenian fleet.

Hostilities between Athens and Sparta continued despite a five years' truce sworn in 451. Finally, in 446, Athens agreed to cede a number

of territories back to Sparta, and the two sides agreed to the Thirty Years' Peace. Athens continued, however, to come into conflict with its own allies, and in 440 a faction from the island of Samos attempted a revolt from the Athenian alliance. Byzantium followed suit. The Samian rebellion was crushed after the Athenians conducted a siege of nine months and both Samos and Byzantium returned as subject states to what by now was the Athenian Empire, in Greek the *arkhē*.

In ca. 454 the Athenians transferred the Delian League's treasury from Delos to Athens, and from then on one-sixtieth of each state's tribute payment was dedicated to the goddess Athena. Those amounts were inscribed and publicly displayed on steles, large stone tablets that are known as the "Athenian Tribute Lists," of which significant fragments have been found. Tribute came to be collected annually in the

days before the City Dionysia, Athens' largest festival and the occasion that saw the premiere of most surviving ancient Greek plays. The allies were also compelled to send offerings of the "first fruits" of their harvests to the Athenian festival of the Great Panathenaea, the city's celebration of its patron goddess.

In the *History*, both Pericles and Cleon refer explicitly (in "On Holding the Course: Pericles' Last Speech" and "On Realpolitik: The Mytilenean Debate") to the Athenian empire as a "tyranny," a conceit that was also sometimes fancifully dramatized on the Athenian comic stage (in, for example, Aristophanes' play *Knights* and Eupolis' lost comedy *Demes*). Athens attempted to maintain control over its subject states in a number of ways. It eventually demanded that all major trials be held in Athens itself, where in 461 the court system had been revolutionized and expanded by the Reforms of

Ephialtes. At some point between the 440s and 420s (scholarly opinion is divided), the city also passed the Coinage Decree, which outlawed the use throughout the empire of any silver coinage but the Athenian tetradrachm (the decree's efficacy is, however, a matter of doubt). Cleruchies continued to be established on conquered territory well into the era of the Peloponnesian War.

The empire also served as a conduit of Athenian culture. The Athenians regularly imposed democratic regimes on their allied states, which, also under varying degrees of compulsion, adopted certain Athenian religious and cultural practices. One testament to Athens' "soft power" in this period was the rapid spread across the wider Mediterranean, even beyond the imperial territories, of enthusiasm for the Athenian theater. The sheer size and complexity of the empire—and of Athenian approaches to

managing it—made for an enormous bureaucracy, much of which was administered by highly skilled "public" slaves.[4]

The figure that dominated the middle decades of the fifth century in Athens was Pericles, an aristocrat, politician, and immensely successful general. Thucydides' esteem for Pericles' talents as a politician is on display in his "Obituary" for him in Book 2 of the *History* (see the introduction to "On Holding the Course: Pericles' Last Speech"), where he observes that, under Pericles' leadership, the city became "a democracy in name, but a rule by the first man in reality" (2.65). There Thucydides also attributes Athens' ultimate loss in the war to the mistakes of Pericles' successors, who devoted their efforts not to the city's best interests but to their own populistic jostling. Texts from subsequent decades, especially Socratic dialogues by Plato, are more overtly critical in

their appraisals of Pericles, but unanimous in acknowledging his skills as a public speaker.

Pericles is credited with launching the city's massive building program of the 440s and 430s, about which Thucydides is notoriously silent. It often has been assumed that Delian League monies were appropriated for the program, though that view has lately been questioned; regardless of the actual funding source, these lavish structures—the Parthenon among them—served to proclaim Athens' status as an imperial city.[5] Sparta, on the other hand, remained an unwalled assemblage of villages throughout the fifth century. Early in his *History*, Thucydides reflects that, if Sparta were to disappear, later generations would forget just how mighty it had been. "But if this were to happen to Athens," he continues, "the sheer sight of [the ruins] would leave the impression that the city's power had been twice what it actually is" (1.10).

Yet what Sparta lacked in its cityscape was outweighed by the stability and soundness of its institutional foundations; by Thucydides' time, it had been operating under the same constitution for more than four centuries (1.18). In the *History*, Spartan moderation, adherence to tradition, and contentment with quiet peace are made to stand in sharp relief against Thucydides' portrait of Athenian rashness, innovation, and restlessness.

The Peloponnesian War

Thucydides submits that the "truest" but least publicly acknowledged cause for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 was "that Athens had become mighty, which provoked fear in Sparta" (1.23). He therefore identifies Spartan worry over Athens' consolidated power as the "ultimate" cause of the war, but he also discusses a number of "proximate" causes.

The first was a conflict that flared up in 435. That year, a democratic revolution provoked the aristocrats of Epidamnus (west of modern day Tirana, Albania) to seek help from their "mother city," the island of Corcyra. When that request fell on deaf ears, the Epidamnians turned to Corinth, Corcyra's own mother city. The Corinthians, the Peloponnesian League allies of Sparta, claimed that they had obligations toward the Epidamnians and resented Corcyra's evident contempt. When Corinth dispatched a force to Epidamnus, the Corcyraeans petitioned for help from Athens, which agreed to join them in a defensive alliance. The culmination of the "Corcyraean Affair" (1.24–55) was a naval battle between Corinth and Corcyra. The Corinthians won an initial victory but backed down after thirty Athenian ships came to Corcyra's defense.

Not long afterward, the Athenians began a siege of Potidaea, a town on the Pallene peninsula (the first "leg" of Chalcidice) in northeastern Greece. Potidaea was a subject ally of Athens but retained ties with Corinth, which was also its own mother city. At the urgings of the Peloponnesian League, Potidaea revolted from the Delian League in 433/2; Athens responded by besieging the city. Relations between Athens and the Peloponnesian League thus continued to break down and, at the Corinthians' insistence, the next year Sparta voted to make a formal declaration that Athens had broken the treaty (1.87). The Spartans then threatened Athens with war if it failed to comply with a series of demands: that it end the siege of Potidaea, allow the island of Aegina its independence, and lift economic sanctions that it had decreed against Megara, a Peloponnesian

ally to Athens' northwest. When the Athenians refused to comply with any of these demands, Spartan emissaries issued a final ultimatum: "The Spartans want peace to continue, if you are willing to allow the Greeks their autonomy" (1.139). At the Athenian Assembly convened to discuss the city's next move, Pericles encouraged his compatriots to stand their ground (see "On Justifying a War: Pericles' First War Speech"), and the Athenians voted to go to war. Each side, then, cast the other as aggressor.

The conflict remembered as the Peloponnesian War broke out halfway into the Thirty Years' Peace that had been negotiated in 446. It unfolded in at least three discrete phases, yet Thucydides himself casts his *History* as the history of a single war and, with reference to that war as a whole, claims at the start of his work that he began to write "in the belief that it would be a massive one and more noteworthy

than those that had come before." He also notes that, before the war was over, all Greece had been forced to take sides.

The phases of the war are typically designated as follows:

1. *The Archidamian War*, named for Archidamus II, king and general of Sparta, and known to Thucydides as the Ten Years' War (431–421). This phase ended with an inconclusive Athenian victory and the unsteady "Peace of Nicias";
2. *The Sicilian Expedition* (415–413), which resulted in catastrophe for Athens;
3. *The Decelean War*, so-called for the Peloponnesians' hostile fortification of Decelea in the region of Attica (where Athens was located), and known to Thucydides as the Ionian War (413–404). This phase ended with Athens' definitive surrender.

Thucydides lived to see the end of the war (see below, "Thucydides and His *History*"), but his narrative breaks off in 411 (subsequent ancient historians of the war tended to begin their accounts where he left off). He does, however, express his opinion that the beginning of the end of the war was Athens' misguided invasion of Sicily, the so-called Sicilian Expedition (see "On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate"). Spartan reinforcements sent to aid the Sicilian forces turned the tide of that war in the "Greek west" and secured the Athenians' defeat. Of some 5,000 troops deployed from Athens, "few . . . ever saw their homecoming day" (7.87).

Despite the magnitude of the blow that Athens suffered in Sicily, neither Athens nor Sparta waited long to begin preparations for renewed war against each other. In 412, Sparta forged an alliance with Persia, which turned the tide in

the Peloponnesians' favor. Athens' allies now saw the city's substantially weakened position as an opportunity to revolt from Athenian rule. The final major battle of the war was fought at the Hellespont in late summer of 405. Under the leadership of their general, Lysander, the Spartans destroyed the Athenian naval fleet at the Battle of Aegospotami. In a famous passage of his *Hellenica*, the Athenian historian Xenophon, Thucydides' younger contemporary, describes the dread that the news of Aegospotami provoked when it arrived in Athens. The Athenians, he recounts, spent that night mourning the dead, but also "lamenting much more for themselves, worried that they would suffer the very things which they had wrought upon the Melians . . . and upon the Histiaeans and the Scionaeans and the Tornaeans and Aeginetans and so many other Greeks" (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.3).

With no allies left but Samos, the starving Athenians finally surrendered to Lysander in the spring of 404. Sparta's allies were eager to see Athens suffer the very fate that its people had so feared in the immediate aftermath of Aegospotami. Yet Xenophon describes how it was, unexpectedly, the Spartans who refused to destroy the city on the grounds that they could not "enslave a Greek city that had done so much good when Greece had been caught in the greatest dangers," a reference to the Persian Wars. The terms that they dictated in the end required that Athens tear down its walls, give up all but twelve ships, allow exiled citizens to return, share friends and enemies with Sparta, and "follow the Spartans on land and sea, wherever they should lead" (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.20). When the Athenian ambassadors communicated these terms to the Athenian Assembly, the people voted to accept. The Peloponnesians allegedly

tore down the walls of Athens joyously and to the accompaniment of flutes, "in the belief that the day marked the beginning of freedom for Greece" (Xen. *Hell.* 2.20.23).

Thucydides and His *History*

We know little about Thucydides' own life. He begins his *History* by identifying himself as an Athenian; its first words are "Thucydides the Athenian composed the War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians . . ." (1.1). He claims that he was alive for all of that war, and implies that, from its start, he was old enough to understand its events (5.26). He tells us that he was serving as elected general in 424, which means that he was likely born in the early 450s. Thucydides thus came of age in the brief but momentous era that saw the Athenian Empire at its height.[6]

When Thucydides narrates his own role in the war, he refers to himself in the third person

as the son of Olorus (4.104; Olorus was an aristocratic name associated with Thrace, the region to the northeast of Greece). In Book 2, he mentions that he survived the plague that devastated Athens during the first years of the war (2.48). In Book 4, he narrates how, in 424, he led the Athenian forces in an attempt to preserve the Athenians' hold on Amphipolis, their valuable base in Thrace. He was entrusted with the mission, he explains, because of his stake in the local gold mines and the influence that this granted him in the region. He arrived too late, however, to prevent Athens from losing Amphipolis to the Spartans under the command of the extraordinary general Brasidas.

For that failure, the Athenians cast Thucydides into exile, where he would remain for twenty years. That long exile was precisely what allowed him the peace and quiet needed to work on his *History* and to conduct inter-

views with parties on both sides of the conflict (5.26). The *History* shows full knowledge of the outcome of the war, which ended in 404; Thucydides is therefore assumed to have died in about 400. This is the extent of the biographical information that can be inferred from his work; additional details are furnished by later ancient biographers but should be treated with caution.[7]

Thucydides organized his *History* by campaign season—consecutive winters and summers of the war—and the text's arrangement in eight books is not his own. The work's degree of completion is still a matter of debate; some scholars have seen the lack of speeches in Book 5 (the Melian Dialogue is not, strictly speaking, a speech) and Book 8 as the result of the work's unfinished state.[8] In his extensive critical essay *On Thucydides*, the ancient critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st c. BCE) noted that Cratippus,

Thucydides' younger contemporary and supposed editor, had commended the lack of "assembly speeches" toward the end of the *History* because he found their earlier prevalence "hindering" and even "annoying" (§16).

Modern readers of the *History* rarely voice that complaint, though they have often wondered to what extent the speeches are Thucydides' own compositions. Toward the beginning of his work, Thucydides provides this account of his methodology:

> As to the speeches that individuals gave both when war was approaching and when it was already underway, it has been difficult to remember precisely what was said, regardless of whether I heard the speeches myself or had them communicated to me by others. That is why I have recorded what I thought that each speaker

> ought to have said in light of the demands of the specific moment, though I have kept as close as possible to the complete spirit of what was actually said. (1.22)

Despite Thucydides' avowed commitment to keeping "as close as possible to the complete spirit of what was actually said," Pericles' first war speech ("On Justifying a War: Pericles' First War Speech"), his funeral oration ("On Dying for Your Country: Pericles' Funeral Oration"), and the Melian Dialogue ("On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue") have all proven particularly vulnerable to charges of "inauthenticity." Whether these passages represent "what was actually said" by the speakers (we will never truly know), they remain challenging and illuminating for students of Thucydides, the Peloponnesian War, classical Athens, and political philosophy more generally.

The "Athenian Thesis"

The speeches included in this volume constitute a small fraction of the total number in the *History*, which by one count tally at 141 (a total that includes speeches in indirect, as well as direct, discourse).[9] This book also contains only "Athenian" speeches. That is not because the Athenians constitute the only side of the story worthy of attention, but because together their speeches open a window onto one particular community's influential and fascinating, but also extraordinarily tendentious and slanted, vision of the world and of itself.[10]

The Athenian speeches, along with the Melian Dialogue, are so often read, studied, and cited today in large part for their presentation of what has come to be known as the "Athenian thesis." That thesis has two parts: first, it is the *very nature* of people and states (and even gods)

to seek constantly to expand and exercise their power; second, they should not be blamed for doing so, seeing as it is simply human nature. A corollary to this thesis is that the abstract concept of moral justice has no real bearing in the realm of interstate relations.

The first articulation of such a thesis appears in a speech made by Athenians in Sparta, to Spartans and other members of the Peloponnesian League, on the eve of the war (that speech is not included here, but many of its points are repeated in speeches that are). In Sparta, the Athenians argue that they simply acted in accordance with "human nature" (literally the "human way") when they "accepted the empire that was handed to" them:

> We have done nothing extraordinary, nor beyond the realm of human nature, if we accepted an empire that was handed to us

> and refuse to give it up, hostage as we are to the three greatest motives of all: honor, fear, and self-interest. Nor indeed are we the first to behave like this, for it is a well-established rule that the weak are oppressed by the strong. (1.76.2)

This line of argumentation sets an early and unsettling tone for Thucydides' representation of the position of "the Athenians" and will be most explicitly reprised in the Melian Dialogue (On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue), where they similarly argue, "Those in positions of power do what their power permits, while the weak have no choice but to accept it" (5.86). It is simply the nature of the world that both gods and humans "always seek to rule wherever they can" (5.105).

Due principally to the positions expressed in the Athenian speeches, in the aftermath of World War II Thucydides was adopted as a

forefather of the international relations paradigm now known as Classical Realism. That paradigm regards nation-states as rational actors engaged in constant struggles for power and security; it also assumes there is such a constant as "human nature" that can be used to explain state behavior. The "Athenian thesis," however, was not named as such until later, when University of Chicago philosopher Leo Strauss coined the phrase in his 1964 book *The City and the Man*. There Strauss read Thucydides' *History* as a work of political philosophy and pronounced that "Thucydides sympathizes and makes us sympathize with political greatness as displayed in fighting for freedom and in the founding, ruling, and expanding of empires."[11]

Strauss's readings of certain ancient Greek texts (including also Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*) were to become profoundly

influential, and today Straussian interpretations of Thucydides are often cited as foundations of American Neoconservative foreign policy. Neoconservatism was born of dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party's "weak" foreign policy stance during the Vietnam War and the Cold War Era more generally: the first Neoconservatives supported socially liberal policy at home but still favored the containment of communism. By the mid-1990s (during the Clinton administration) leading "Neocon" thinkers were arguing that the United States' post–Cold War international role should be one of "benevolent global hegemony."[12]

To many of these "second-wave Neocons" Thucydides' *History* seemed to confirm the wisdom of the United States' aggressive promotion of democracy and other national interests abroad, including by means of military might (the Athenians, too, imposed democracy

on their allies; see "The Rise of the Athenian Empire" above). In a 2003 essay, Irving Kristol, the "Godfather of Neoconservatism," even called Thucydides' *History* "the favorite Neoconservative text on foreign affairs," a status that he attributed to the work of both Leo Strauss and Donald Kagan, a historian of classical Greece and conservative public intellectual at Yale.[13] Kristol's essay appeared just months after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq; in the early years of the millennium Thucydides' *History* was regularly invoked in justifications of the American invasions of and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.[14]

Strauss himself, however, had read Thucydides as condemning the immoderation of classical Athens. He argued that Thucydides saw that regime as "defective" and also "did his best to prevent Pericles' Funeral Speech from being mistaken for his own praise of Athens."[15] Many

have since read Thucydides as performing an implicit critique of the Athenians' Realism, hawkishness, and imperialism, a critique that seems to materialize largely through what Edith Foster has called "contrasting narrative illustrations."[16] Pericles' funeral oration ("On Dying for Your Country: Pericles' Funeral Oration"), for example, celebrates an idealization of Athens, but after that speech Thucydides immediately turns to a gruesome account of the havoc wreaked there by the plague—a picture of the city at its lowest. He also places the display of Athenian ruthlessness in the Melian Dialogue not long before his two-book account of the catastrophe of the Sicilian Expedition (see "On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate"), during which the Athenians suffered, in a manner of speaking, the consequences of their own thesis. Such contrasts are evident, however, only if one takes into account the en-

tirety of Thucydides' *History*; speeches, after all, account for only about 25 percent of the text as a whole.[17]

Despite the currency that Thucydides' name has acquired in American political discourse, biased political lenses serve to obscure rather than illuminate the text by magnifying particular aspects and conveniently obscuring others. In their own right, Thucydides' Athenian speeches offer a complex picture of classical Athenian debates about empire, war, and the city's place in the world. They also present a deeply troubling set of views on the nature of human behavior, imperial power, interstate relations, the reconciliation of might and right, and the relationship between thought, word, and action. But while Thucydides' speakers may perform explicit analysis along these lines, the wisdom of their reflections—both in their specific historical context and more absolutely—

will always remain a matter of debate. Nor should these speeches be read as evidence of what Thucydides himself believed: one must always bear in mind that, when Thucydides' characters speak, "they are doing so with something to say, something to hide, something to achieve at a particular time and place."[18] This challenging combination of revelation and concealment is itself one of the reasons these speeches are rewarding reading today, when many of the points and problems they raise remain as urgent as ever. Nevertheless, the reader who turns to these speeches in search of practical ancient wisdom is strongly encouraged to do so with the ultimate fate of Thucydides' Athens in mind.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT WAR

The Speeches

On Justifying a War: Pericles' First War Speech (432 BCE)

The First Peloponnesian War concluded in 446 with the Thirty Years' Peace. By the time Pericles would have given this speech, however, Athens had already clashed with the Peloponnesian League again in various proxy conflicts across Greece. Sparta regarded Athens in breach of the 446 treaty on several fronts and began to issue formal demands for concessions.

When a last Spartan delegation arrived in Athens bearing a final ultimatum—Sparta wanted peace but would go to war if Athens refused to allow the rest of the Greeks their autonomy—a meeting of the Athenian Assembly was called to deliberate what response the city would make. Many men spoke at that meeting, "some arguing

that war was necessary," others that compromises should be made in the interest of peace (1.139). In the end, though, Pericles prevailed on his fellow citizens to stand their ground as a matter of principle against the Peloponnesians' demands, even if meant accepting the prospect of war. The Athenians "made a response to the Spartans just as he suggested, in both detail and spirit" and the Spartan "envoys left for home and were no longer sent to negotiate" (1.145).[1]

The themes and questions that Pericles raises in this, his first speech in the *History*, offer insight into how Athens had come to articulate its role and position in Greece and shed light on "Periclean" policy, at least as Thucydides understood it, perhaps partially in retrospect. Pericles' arguments for why "command of the sea is a powerful thing" hearken back to Thucydides' account early in the work of how the emergence of navies dramatically changed Greece (1.8–15)

and the question of whether it is preferable to be, in modern terms, a "whale" (a sea power) rather than an "elephant" (a land power) remains a point of debate today. This speech as a whole also represents an impressive lesson in how to deflect blame for inciting a war while simultaneously formulating pretexts for one.

Pericles does, however, issue the Athenians salutary warnings: the thrill of voting for war does not always carry over to the actual fight, and war itself should not be combined with attempts at territorial expansion. Knowing what we do now—and what Thucydides himself did then—about the long-term course of the war (especially the fate of the Sicilian Expedition: see "On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate"), it is difficult not to hear an ominous ring in Pericles' memorable admonition to his fellow citizens: "I fear our own mistakes more than the enemy's schemes."

[140] Τῆς μὲν γνώμης, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, αἰεὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἔχομαι μὴ εἴκειν Πελοποννησίοις, καίπερ εἰδὼς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὐ τῇ αὐτῇ ὀργῇ ἀναπειθομένους τε πολεμεῖν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ πράσσοντας, πρὸς δὲ τὰς ξυμφορὰς καὶ τὰς γνώμας τρεπομένους. ὁρῶ δὲ καὶ νῦν ὁμοῖα καὶ παραπλήσια ξυμβουλευτέα μοι ὄντα, καὶ τοὺς ἀναπειθομένους ὑμῶν δικαιῶ τοῖς κοινῇ δόξασιν, ἢν ἄρα τι καὶ σφαλλώμεθα, βοηθεῖν, ἢ μηδὲ κατορθοῦντας τῆς ξυνέσεως μεταποιεῖσθαι. ἐνδέχεται γὰρ τὰς ξυμφορὰς τῶν πραγμάτων οὐχ ἧσσον ἀμαθῶς χωρῆσαι ἢ καὶ τὰς διανοίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· δι᾽ ὅπερ καὶ τὴν τύχην, ὅσα ἂν παρὰ λόγον ξυμβῇ, εἰώθαμεν αἰτιᾶσθαι.

Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ πρότερόν τε δῆλοι ἦσαν ἐπιβουλεύοντες ἡμῖν καὶ νῦν οὐχ ἥκιστα. εἰρημένον γὰρ δίκας μὲν τῶν διαφορῶν ἀλλήλοις διδόναι καὶ δέχεσθαι, ἔχειν δὲ ἑκατέρους ἃ

ON JUSTIFYING A WAR

History of the Peloponnesian War 1.140–144

[140] Athenians, I have always maintained that we must not make concessions to the Peloponnesians, though I do realize that people are often more passionate when they are first convinced to go to war than when they actually wage it; that as circumstances change, so too does resolve. Now I see that I must give you the same, or virtually the same, counsel yet again, and I am going to insist that those of you now making up your minds either stand by our collective decisions, even if they lead us astray, or else take none of the credit for their wisdom if we do succeed. Events can unfold just as errantly as human intentions, which is why we so often blame bad luck when things fail to go as planned.

It was clear before that the Spartans were plotting against us and that has become even clearer now. The terms of the treaty dictated

ἔχομεν, οὔτε αὐτοὶ δίκας πω ᾔτησαν οὔτε ἡμῶν διδόντων δέχονται, βούλονται δὲ πολέμῳ μᾶλλον ἢ λόγοις τὰ ἐγκλήματα διαλύεσθαι, καὶ ἐπιτάσσοντες ἤδη καὶ οὐκέτι αἰτιώμενοι πάρεισιν. Ποτειδαίας τε γὰρ ἀπανίστασθαι κελεύουσι καὶ Αἴγιναν αὐτόνομον ἀφιέναι καὶ τὸ Μεγαρέων ψήφισμα καθαιρεῖν· οἱ δὲ τελευταῖοι οἵδε ἥκοντες καὶ τοὺς Ελληνας προαγορεύουσιν αὐτονόμους ἀφιέναι.

Ὑμῶν δὲ μηδεὶς νομίσῃ περὶ βραχέος ἂν πολεμεῖν, εἰ τὸ Μεγαρέων ψήφισμα μὴ καθέλοιμεν, ὅπερ μάλιστα προύχονται εἰ καθαιρεθείη μὴ ἂν γίγνεσθαι τὸν πόλεμον, μηδὲ ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς αἰτίαν ὑπολίπησθε ὡς διὰ μικρὸν ἐπολεμήσατε. τὸ γὰρ βραχύ τι τοῦτο πᾶσαν ὑμῶν ἔχει τὴν βεβαίωσιν καὶ τεῖραν τῆς γνώμης, οἷς εἰ ξυγχωρήσετε, καὶ ἄλλο τι μεῖζον εὐθὺς ἐπιταχθήσεσθε ὡς φόβῳ καὶ τοῦτο ὑπακούσαντες· ἀπισχυρισάμενοι δὲ σαφὲς ἂν καταστήσαιτε αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ὑμῖν μᾶλλον προσφέρεσθαι.

that we mutually submit and accept appeals for arbitration and that, in the meantime, each side be allowed to keep the territory it already has. They, however, have never sought arbitration; nor have they accepted our requests for it. They want to resolve this conflict by war, not diplomacy, and have already taken to issuing orders in place of requests. They demand that we quit Potidaea, allow Aegina its independence, and repeal the Megarean Decree. Now these latest emissaries have come to proclaim that we have to let the Greeks be independent.

Nobody here should think we will be going to war for nothing if we refuse to repeal the decree, the demand at the top of their list—if it is repealed, they claim, then there will be no war. Nor should anyone feel any lingering remorse about going to war over a matter so "small." This minor issue actually encompasses within it the whole proof and test of your resolution.

[141] Αὐτόθεν δὴ διανοήθητε ἢ ὑπακούειν πρίν τι βλαβῆναι, ἢ εἰ πολεμήσομεν, ὥσπερ ἔμοιγε ἄμεινον δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ ἐπὶ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἐπὶ βραχείᾳ ὁμοίως προφάσει μὴ εἴξοντες μηδὲ ξὺν φόβῳ ἕξοντες ἃ κεκτήμεθα τὴν γὰρ αὐτὴν δύναται δούλωσιν ἥ τε μεγίστη καὶ ἡ ἐλαχίστη δικαίωσις ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων πρὸ δίκης τοῖς πέλας ἐπιτασσομένη.

Τὰ δὲ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῶν ἑκατέροις ὑπαρχόντων ὡς οὐκ ἀσθενέστερα ἔξομεν γνῶτε καθ' ἕκαστον ακούοντες. αὐτουργοί τε γάρ εἰσι Πελοποννήσιοι καὶ οὔτε ἰδίᾳ οὔτ' ἐν κοινῷ χρήματά ἐστιν, ἔπειτα χρονίων πολέμων καὶ διαποντίων ἄπειροι διὰ τὸ βραχέως αὐτοὶ ἐπ'

If you capitulate to them, then they are just going to bully you over something bigger once they see you succumb in this instance to fear. But if you are firm, you will make it clear to them that they have to treat you as equals.

[141] So, make up your minds at once: either to submit before harm comes to you or go to war (in my opinion the better course), be the pretext major or minor. Do not make concessions or act out of fear for our possessions. When neighbors circumvent procedure and start issuing demands, large or small, to their equals, it is always tantamount to the same thing: slavery.

As to matters of war, and the means that both sides have available for it, if you listen to each of my points you will see that we are not in the weaker position. First of all, the Peloponnesians farm their own land and possess neither private nor public wealth. Second, they

ἀλλήλους ὑπὸ πενίας ἐπιφέρειν. καὶ οἱ τοιοῦτοι οὔτε ναῦς πληροῦν οὔτε πεζὰς στρατιὰς πολλάκις ἐκπέμπειν δύνανται, ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων τε ἅμα ἀπόντες καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν δαπανῶντες καὶ προσέτι καὶ θαλάσσης εἰργόμενοι· αἱ δὲ περιουσίαι τοὺς πολέμους μᾶλλον ἢ αἱ βίαιοι ἐσφοραὶ ἀνέχουσιν. σώμασί τε ἑτοιμότεροι οἱ αὐτουργοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἢ χρήμασι πολεμεῖν, τὸ μὲν πιστὸν ἔχοντες ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων κἂν περιγενέσθαι, τὸ δὲ οὐ βέβαιον μὴ οὐ προαναλώσειν, ἄλλως τε κἂν παρὰ δόξαν, ὅπερ εἰκός, ὁ πόλεμος αὐτοῖς μηκύνηται.

Μάχῃ μὲν γὰρ μιᾷ πρὸς ἅπαντας Ἕλληνας δυνατοὶ Πελοποννήσιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι ἀντίσχειν, πολεμεῖν δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὁμοίαν ἀντιπαρασκευὴν ἀδύνατοι, ὅταν μήτε βουλευτηρίῳ ἑνὶ χρώμενοι παραχρῆμά τι ὀξέως ἐπιτελῶσι πάντες τε ἰσόψηφοι ὄντες καὶ οὐχ ὁμόφυλοι τὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος σπεύδῃ, ἐξ ὧν φιλεῖ μηδὲν ἐπιτελὲς γίγνεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ οἱ μὲν ὡς μάλιστα τιμωρήσασθαί τινα βούλονται, οἱ δὲ ὡς

have no experience of prolonged wars overseas because their poverty curtails even the conflicts they have with each other. They cannot outfit ships or deploy infantry because of the periods of absence and personal expense that doing so would require. What is more, they are cut off from the sea. State funds are better at sustaining wars than are compulsory private taxes and farmers will be quicker to volunteer their persons than their property for a war effort. They think they can rely on their bodies to prevail in the face of danger but worry that their resources will be exhausted if the war should drag out unexpectedly, as it is likely to do.

The Peloponnesians might be able to hold their own against the rest of the Greeks in a one-off battle, but they cannot carry out a full-scale war unless it is against an enemy that has made comparable counter-preparations. That is because they are incapable of taking swift and

ἥκιστα τὰ οἰκεῖα φθεῖραι. χρόνιοί τε ξυνιόντες ἐν βραχεῖ μὲν μορίῳ σκοποῦσί τι τῶν κοινῶν, τῷ δὲ πλέονι τὰ οἰκεῖα πράσσουσι, καὶ ἕκαστος οὐ παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀμέλειαν οἴεται βλάψειν, μέλειν δέ τινι καὶ ἄλλῳ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ τι προϊδεῖν, ὥστε τῷ αὐτῷ ὑπὸ ἁπάντων ἰδίᾳ δοξάσματι λανθάνειν τὸ κοινὸν ἁθρόον φθειρόμενον.

[142] Μέγιστον δέ, τῇ τῶν χρημάτων σπάνει κωλύσονται, ὅταν σχολῇ αὐτὰ ποριζόμενοι

decisive action in their combined assembly: each member of their league has an equal vote and, because it is made up of various peoples, they all have their own agendas to pursue. This is why, as a general rule, they get nothing done. Some of them want most of all to exact vengeance on some enemy or other, while the last thing others want is to see their resources depleted. They rarely meet and when they do they spend very little time on matters of general concern and most of it maneuvering on behalf of their individual interests. Each member thinks that no harm will come from his own indifference, that vigilance is someone else's responsibility. And because that is the approach they all quietly adopt, nobody realizes that the group's common interests are being left to crumble.

[142] Most importantly, however, they will be hindered by lack of money so long as they

διαμέλλωσιν· τοῦ δὲ πολέμου οἱ καιροὶ οὐ μενετοί. Καὶ μὴν οὐδ᾽ ἡ ἐπιτείχισις οὐδὲ τὸ ναυτικὸν αὐτῶν ἄξιον φοβηθῆναι. τὴν μὲν γὰρ χαλεπὸν καὶ ἐν εἰρήνῃ πόλιν ἀντίπαλον κατασκευάσασθαι, ἧ που δὴ ἐν πολεμίᾳ τε καὶ οὐχ ἧσσον ἐκείνοις ἡμῶν ἀντεπιτετειχισμένων· φρούριον δ᾽ εἰ ποιήσονται, τῆς μὲν γῆς βλάπτοιεν ἄν τι μέρος καταδρομαῖς καὶ αὐτομολίαις, οὐ μέντοι ἱκανόν γε ἔσται ἐπιτειχίζειν τε κωλύειν ἡμᾶς πλεύσαντας ἐν τῇ ἐκείνων καί, ᾗπερ ἰσχύομεν, ταῖς ναυσὶν ἀμύνεσθαι.

Πλέον γὰρ ὅμως ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν τοῦ κατὰ γῆν ἐκ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἐμπειρίας ἢ ᾽κεῖνοι ἐκ τοῦ κατ᾽ ἤπειρον ἐς τὰ ναυτικά. τὸ δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης ἐπιστήμονας γενέσθαι οὐ ῥᾳδίως αὐτοῖς προσγενήσεται. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑμεῖς, μελετῶντες αὐτὸ εὐθὺς ἀπὸ τῶν Μηδικῶν, ἐξείργασθέ πω· πῶς δὴ ἄνδρες γεωργοὶ καὶ οὐ θαλάσσιοι, καὶ προσέτι οὐδὲ μελετῆσαι. ἐασόμενοι διὰ τὸ ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν πολλαῖς ναυσὶν αἰεὶ ἐφορμεῖσθαι, ἄξιον ἄν τι

are slow to levy it—and the hour of war waits for no man. Neither their effort to fortify our territory nor their naval fleet is worth fearing. Even in peacetime it is no easy task to build fortifications in a hostile city-state and it is certainly no easier in war, especially when you have a formidable enemy also establishing bases within your own borders. If they really are going to set up a garrison here, the incursions and consequent slave desertions might well damage some of our land. That will not, however, be sufficient to prevent us from building our own fortifications in their territory; nor will it keep us from sailing our ships against them, which is our strong suit.

Furthermore, our naval experience is more applicable to land than their land experience is to naval matters, and it will be no easy thing for them to gain mastery over the sea. You yourselves have been striving at that ever since the

δρῷεν; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ ὀλίγας ἐφορμούσας κἂν διακινδυνεύσειαν πλήθει τὴν ἀμαθίαν θρασύνοντες, πολλαῖς δὲ εἰργόμενοι ἡσυχάσουσι, καὶ ἐν τῷ μὴ μελετῶντι ἀξυνετώτεροι ἔσονται καὶ δι᾽ αὐτὸ καὶ ὀκνηρότεροι. τὸ δὲ ναυτικὸν τέχνης ἐστίν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλο τι, καὶ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται, ὅταν τύχῃ, ἐκ παρέργου μελετᾶσθαι, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον μηδὲν ἐκείνῳ πάρεργον ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι.

[143] Εἴ τε καὶ κινήσαντες τῶν Ὀλυμπίασιν ἢ Δελφοῖς χρημάτων μισθῷ μείζονι πειρῷντο ἡμῶν ὑπολαβεῖν τοὺς ξένους τῶν ναυτῶν, μὴ ὄντων μὲν

Persian Wars and have not managed it yet, so how will men who are farmers, not seamen, and who never get any practice at sea because we keep ships stationed against them, be able to accomplish anything of note on that front? Even if they make some desperate attempt against a few moored ships and are foolish enough to take heart at the thought of their superior numbers, the moment they encounter an entire fleet they will be blockaded and unable to maneuver and lack of experience will make them more inept and therefore hesitant. Seamanship is an art, just like anything else, and you cannot merely practice it "on the side" whenever you feel like it. To the contrary, it leaves you no room for side pursuits.

[143] Suppose, moreover, that they were to get their hands on the treasuries of Olympia and Delphi and attempt to poach our mercenary

ἡμῶν ἀντιπάλων ἐσβάντων αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν μετοίκων δεινὸν ἂν ἦν· νῦν δὲ τόδε τε ὑπάρχει καί, ὅπερ κράτιστον, κυβερνήτας ἔχομεν πολίτας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ὑπηρεσίαν πλείους καὶ ἀμείνους ἢ ἅπασα ἡ ἄλλη Ἑλλάς. καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ κινδύνῳ οὐδεὶς ἂν δέξαιτο τῶν ξένων τήν τε αὐτοῦ φεύγειν καὶ μετὰ τῆς᾽ ἥσσονος ἅμα ἐλπίδος ὀλίγων ἡμερῶν ἕνεκα μεγάλου μισθοῦ δόσεως ἐκείνοις ξυναγωνίζεσθαι.

Καὶ τὰ μὲν Πελοποννησίων ἔμοιγε τοιαῦτα καὶ παραπλήσια δοκεῖ εἶναι, τὰ δὲ ἡμέτερα τούτων τε ὧνπερ ἐκείνοις ἐμεμψάμην ἀπηλλάχθαι καὶ ἄλλα οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου μεγάλα ἔχειν. ἤν τε ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν ἡμῶν πεζῇ ἴωσιν, ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκείνων πλευσούμεθα, καὶ οὐκέτι ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου ἔσται Πελοποννήσου τε μέρος τι τμηθῆναι καὶ τὴν ᾽Αττικὴν ἅπασαν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἕξουσιν ἄλλην ἀντιλαβεῖν ἀμαχεί, ἡμῖν δ᾽ ἔστι γῆ πολλὴ καὶ ἐν νήσοις καὶ κατ᾽ ἤπειρον· μέγα γὰρ τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κράτος.

sailors with the prospect of better pay. That strategy would only work if we were unworthy adversaries for lack of citizens and residents to man our ships. But we are in fact strong in that respect, and, most importantly, we can boast more and better qualified native helmsmen and crews than the rest of Greece put together. In any case, none of our mercenaries would, at such a high risk, be willing to abandon his country to fight on the side with worse odds of winning just for a few days' worth of good pay.

That is more or less how I see the Peloponnesians' situation. Our own position, by contrast, seems free of the weaknesses that I have outlined in theirs and has unique advantages besides. If they invade our country on foot, we will invade theirs by sea. It would be worse for them to see even a part of the Peloponnese ravished than for us to have all Attica destroyed.

Σκέψασθε δέ· εἰ γὰρ ἦμεν νησιῶται, τίνες ἂν ἀληπτότεροι ἦσαν; καὶ νῦν χρὴ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τούτου διανοηθέντας τὴν μὲν γῆν καὶ οἰκίας ἀφεῖναι, τῆς δὲ θαλάσσης κα ὶπόλεως φυλακὴν ἔχειν, καὶ Πελοποννησίοις ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ὀργισθέντας πολλῷ πλέοσι μὴ διαμάχεσθαι (κρατήσαντές τε γὰρ αὖθις οὐκ ἐλάσσοσι μαχούμεθα καὶ ἢν σφαλῶμεν, τὰ τῶν ξυμμάχων, ὅθεν ἰσχύομεν, προσαπόλλυται· οὐ γὰρ ἡσυχάσουσι μὴ ἱκανῶν ἡμῶν ὄντων ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς στρατεύειν), τήν τε ὀλόφυρσιν μὴ οἰκιῶν καὶ γῆς ποιεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῶν σωμάτων· οὐ γὰρ τάδε τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἀλλ᾽ οἱ ἄνδρες ταῦτα κτῶνται. καὶ εἰ ᾠμην πείσειν ὑμᾶς, αὐτοὺς ἂν ἐξελθόντας ἐκέλευον αὐτὰ δῃῶσαι καὶ δεῖξαι Πελοποννησίοις ὅτι τούτων γε ἕνεκα οὐχ ὑπακούσεσθε.

They would be left with no other land except what they might win in battle, while we have plenty more territory on the islands and the mainland. Command of the sea is a powerful thing.

Just think: if we were islanders, it would be nearly impossible to catch us! From here on out that is the mindset that we need to adopt. Forget your land and your houses; think only of guarding sea and city. You must not enter into a fight on land with the Peloponnesians, who greatly outnumber us, out of anger at losing your possessions. If we engage them on land and win, we will have to fight just as many of them again; if we lose we will also lose our allies. They are the source of our strength but will also give us no peace if we are powerless to march against them. Weep not for the loss of homes and property but only for the loss of lives. Homes and property, after all, do not

[144] Πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔχω ἐς ἐλπίδα τοῦ περιέσεσθαι, ἢν ἐθέλητε ἀρχήν τε μὴ ἐπικτᾶσθαι ἅμα πολεμοῦντες καὶ κινδύνους αὐθαιρέτους μὴ προστίθεσθαι· μᾶλλον γὰρ πεφόβημαι τὰς οἰκείας ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίας ἢ τὰς τῶν ἐναντίων διανοίας. ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνα μὲν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ λόγῳ ἅμα τοῖς ἔργοις δηλωθήσεται· νῦν δὲ τούτοις ἀποκρινάμενοι ἀποπέμψωμεν, Μεγαρέας μὲν ὅτι ἐάσο μεν ἀγορᾷ καὶ λιμέσι χρῆσθαι, ἢν καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ξενηλασίας μὴ ποιῶσι μήτε ἡμῶν μήτε τῶν ἡμετέρων ξυμμάχων (οὔτε γὰρ ἐκεῖνο κωλύει ἐν ταῖς σπονδαῖς οὔτε τόδε), τὰς δὲ πόλεις ὅτι αὐτονόμους ἀφήσομεν, εἰ καὶ αὐτονόμους ἔχοντες

acquire people; people acquire them. In fact, if I thought that I could persuade you, I would urge you to go out and destroy all of those things yourselves if only to show the Peloponnesians that you will not relent merely out of concern for what you own.

[144] I have many other reasons to be hopeful that we will prevail, provided that you do not mix war with attempts to expand the empire or contrive additional dangers for yourselves: I fear our own mistakes more than the enemy's schemes. Those are points that I will discuss in another speech when the time is right. For now, we must send the emissaries away with the following message: we will restore access to our markets and harbors to Megara only when the Spartans have ended their alien acts and quit expelling our citizens and allies (nothing in the treaty precludes any of these things).

ἐσπεισάμεθα καὶ ὅταν κἀκεῖνοι ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἀποδῶσι πόλεσι μὴ σφίσιν τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐπιτηδείως αὐτονομεῖσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἑκάστοις ὡς βούλονται· δίκας τε ὅτι ἐθέλομεν δοῦναι κατὰ τὰς ξυνθήκας, πολέμου δὲ οὐκ ἄρξομεν, ἀρχομένους δὲ ἀμυνούμεθα. ταῦτα γὰρ δίκαια καὶ πρέποντα ἅμα τῇδε τῇ πόλει ἀποκρίνασθαι.

Εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ ὅτι ἀνάγκη πολεμεῖν (ἢν δὲ ἑκούσιοι μᾶλλον δεχώμεθα, ἧσσον ἐγκεισομένους τοὺς ἐναντίους ἕξομεν), ἔκ τε τῶν μεγίστων κινδύνων ὅτι καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώτῃ μέγισται τιμαὶ περιγίγνονται. οἱ γοῦν πατέρες ἡμῶν ὑποστάντες Μήδους καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ τοσῶνδε ὁρμώμενοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἐκλιπόντες, γνώμῃ τε πλέονι ἢ τύχῃ καὶ τόλμῃ μείζονι ἢ δυνάμει τόν τε βάρβαρον

And we will let the Greek city-states be independent, provided that they were independent when we swore the treaty, once the Spartans have restored independence to their own cities and allowed them to ally with whomever they wish. Tell them we are happy to follow the procedures outlined in the agreement and will not start a war but will indeed fight if they initiate one. This is a just and fitting answer for our city to make.

We need to accept that war is necessary, and if we are willing to face that fact then we will find our enemies less resolute. We should further acknowledge that, for cities and individuals alike, the reward of immense danger is immense honor. Our fathers, as you know, set out to resist the Persians not only with lesser resources but even once those resources had been exhausted. It was with acumen rather than luck,

ἀπεώσαντο καὶ ἐς τάδε προήγαγον αὐτά· ὧν οὐ χρὴ λείπεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τούς τε ἐχθροὺς παντὶ τρόπῳ ἀμύνεσθαι καὶ τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις πειρᾶσθαι αὐτὰ μὴ ἐλάσσω παραδοῦναι.

by daring rather than strength, that they drove back the barbarian force and established the state that we have today. We must not fail to live up to their example but make every attempt to defeat our enemies and leave no lesser a country to our own descendants.

On Dying for Your Country: Pericles' Funeral Oration (431/0 BCE)

After just fourteen years, the Thirty Years' Peace came to an end on a moonless, rainy night in the spring of 431. War preparations began with general enthusiasm, especially among the youth, and "all Greece hung in suspense as it awaited the conflict of its two greatest cities" (2.8). Thucydides reports that sympathies lay primarily with the Peloponnesians and hopes ran high that Greece might be restored to liberty from Athenian rule. He also tells of how Archidamus, the Spartan king and general, nevertheless warned his troops of the challenges that lay ahead: though Greece might be with them, the course of war is always impossible to predict; Athens was a mighty power and the Athenians would mount an equally mighty defense (2.11).

In Athens, Pericles urged his fellow citizens not to march out to meet their enemies but to prepare to defend from within the city walls. The people of rural Attica abandoned their homes and took crowded refuge in the city. Archidamus began his invasion in late spring, but to his confusion the Athenians made no countermove; despite the people's bitter protestations, Pericles insisted that they continue to watch and wait. Meanwhile, crews from the Athenian navy sacked villages around the Peloponnese and occupied the nearby island of Aegina. Finally, in late summer, Pericles led an army—the biggest force Athens had marshalled yet—against Megara, the quarrels over whose exclusion from the ports of the Athenian Empire were mentioned in the previous speech (see also introduction, "The Peloponnesian War").

In Athens that winter, at the end of the campaign season, Pericles delivered a customary

funeral oration for the war dead. The tradition of doing so is thought to have originated in the years or decades following the Persian Wars; before the Peloponnesian War, Pericles had already delivered at least one such oration, in ca. 439, over Athenians who had died in the campaign against Samos (only short quotations from that speech survive). As Thucydides has it, Pericles devoted most of his funeral oration in 431/0 to an account of the exceptionalism of the Athenian *politeia*—a word related to *polis* ("city-state") and that gives us English "polity," but whose semantic range in Ancient Greek covered the entire remit of the state, from its institutions and government to its citizenry and civic life. In short, a state's *politeia* is its "constitution" in all senses of the word. In the mid-fourth century BCE the Athenian intellectual Isocrates remarked that "the soul of a city is none other than its *politeia*" (*Areopagiticus* §14).[2]

Pericles' funeral oration probably constitutes the best-known section of the entire *History*. Since the nineteenth century, the speech has often been read as a kind of manifesto for the values of various nations and even the "West" as a whole. Quotations from it were plastered on London buses during the First World War, and throughout much of the Cold War extracts were blasted nightly from loudspeakers in Athens as part of the touristic "Acropolis Sound and Light Show." For its encomium of democracy, the speech has been quoted by countless politicians; for the same reason, in 1937 the regime of the Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas issued an order banning it from study in schools.

Pericles' funeral oration offers a challenging and eloquent prose-hymn of the Athenian ideal. In its context, however, the task of the speech—and of all Athenian funeral orations—was ultimately one of affirming that the ideal itself was

worth dying for. The following translation begins with the chapter in which Thucydides describes the tradition of the public funeral that preceded the oration.

[34] *Ἐν δὲ τῷ αὐτῷ χειμῶνι Ἀθηναῖοι τῷ πατρίῳ νόμῳ χρώμενοι δημοσίᾳ ταφὰς ἐποιήσαντο τῶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ πολέμῳ πρώτων ἀποθανόν των τρόπῳ τοιῷδε. τὰ μὲν ὀστᾶ προτίθενται τῶν ἀπογενομένων πρότριτα σκηνὴν ποιήσαντες, καὶ ἐπιφέρει τῷ αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος ἤν τι βούληται· ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἡ ἐκφορὰ ᾖ, λάρνακας κυπαρισσίνας ἄγουσιν ἅμαξαι, φυλῆς ἑκάστης μίαν· ἔνεστι δὲ τὰ ὀστᾶ ἧς ἕκαστος ἦν φυλῆς. μία δὲ κλίνη κενὴ φέρεται ἐστρωμένη τῶν ἀφανῶν, οἳ ἂν μὴ εὑρεθῶσιν ἐς ἀναίρεσιν. ξυνεκφέρει δὲ ὁ βουλόμενος καὶ ἀστῶν καὶ ξένων, καὶ γυναῖκες πάρεισιν αἱ προσήκουσαι ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον ὀλοφυρόμεναι. τιθέασιν οὖν ἐς τὸ δημόσιον σῆμα, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοῦ καλλίστου προαστείου τῆς πόλεως καὶ αἰεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ θάπτουσι τοὺς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων πλήν γε τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι· ἐκείνων δὲ διαπρεπῆ τὴν ἀρετὴν κρίναντες αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐποίησαν.*

ON DYING FOR YOUR COUNTRY

History of the Peloponnesian War 2.34–46

[34] *In the same winter, the Athenians followed their ancestral custom and held a funeral at public expense for the first who had fallen in the war. These funerals are conducted as follows: for two days beforehand, the bones of the dead are laid out in a specially constructed tent, and everyone brings any offerings they wish for their family members. Next, the bodies are borne out; carts draw coffins made of cypress-wood, one for each of the tribes, each one carrying the bones of the men who were members of that tribe. An empty bier is also brought forth, arrayed for the missing who could not be recovered when the bodies were gathered. Anyone who wishes, citizen or foreigner, may attend the funeral and female relatives of the dead perform laments over the tomb. They then bury the bodies in the public cemetery, which is in the city's most*

Ἐπειδὰν δὲ κρύψωσι γῇ, ἀνὴρ ἠρημένος ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως ὃς ἂν γνώμῃ τε δοκῇ μὴ ἀξύνετος εἶναι καὶ ἀξιώσει προήκῃ, λέγει ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἔπαινον τὸν πρέποντα· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἀπέρχονται. ὧδε μὲν θάπτουσιν· καὶ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ πολέμου, ὁπότε ξυμβαίη αὐτοῖς, ἐχρῶντο τῷ νόμῳ. ἐπὶ δ᾽ οὖν τοῖς πρώτοις τοῖσδε Περικλῆς ὁ Ξανθίππου ἠρέθη λέγειν. καὶ ἐπειδὴ καιρὸς ἐλάμβανε, προελθὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ σήματος ἐπὶ βῆμα ὑψηλὸν πεποιημένον, ὅπως ἀκούοιτο ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον τοῦ ὁμίλου, ἔλεγε τοιάδε.

[35] Οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ τῶν ἐνθάδε ἤδη εἰρηκότων ἐπαινοῦσι τὸν προσθέντα τῷ νόμῳ τὸν

beautiful suburb. This is where they always inter the war dead—except for those who fell at Marathon, whose valor was deemed so extraordinary that they were buried there on the spot.

Once they have covered the bodies with earth, a man chosen by the city, someone regarded as especially wise and who is greatly esteemed, speaks appropriate words of praise over them. After that, everyone departs. Throughout the course of the war this was the custom that they followed whenever the occasion called for it. Pericles, the son of Xanthippus, was chosen to speak over the first who had fallen. When the time came, he stepped forward from the burial place and ascended a platform built high so that he could be heard by as many in the crowd as possible. This is what he said:

[35] Many who have spoken here have praised the person who first instituted the tradition of

λόγον τόνδε, ὡς καλὸν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων θαπτομένοις ἀγορ εσθαι αὐτόν. ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀρκοῦν ἂν ἐδόκει εἶναι ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργῳ γενομένων ἔργῳ καὶ δηλοῦσθαι τὰς τιμάς, οἷα καὶ νῦν περὶ τὸν τάφον τόνδε δημοσίᾳ παρασκευασθέντα ὁρᾶτε, καὶ μὴ ἐν ἑνὶ ἀνδρὶ πολλῶν ἀρετὰς κινδυνεύεσθαι εὖ τε καὶ χεῖρον εἰπόντι πιστευθῆναι.

Χαλεπὸν γὰρ τὸ μετρίως εἰπεῖν ἐν ᾧ μόλις καὶ ἡ δόκησις τῆς ἀληθείας βεβαιοῦται. ὅ τε γὰρ ξυνειδὼς καὶ εὔνους ἀκροατὴς τάχ᾽ ἄν τι ἐνδεεστέρως πρὸς ἃ βούλεταί τε καὶ ἐπίσταται νομίσειε δηλοῦσθαι, ὅ τε ἄπειρος ἔστιν ἃ καὶ πλεονάζεσθαι, διὰ φθόνον, εἴ τι ὑπὲρ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἀκούοι. μέχρι γὰρ τοῦδε ἀνεκτοὶ οἱ ἔπαινοί εἰσι περὶ ἑτέρων λεγόμενοι, ἐς ὅσον ἄν καὶ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος οἴηται ἱκανὸς εἶναι δρᾶσαί τι ὧν ἤκουσεν· τῷ δὲ ὑπερβάλλοντι αὐτῶν φθονοῦντες ἤδη καὶ ἀπιστοῦσιν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ τοῖς πάλαι οὕτως ἐδοκιμάσθη ταῦτα καλῶς ἔχειν, χρὴ καὶ ἐμὲ ἑπόμενον τῷ νόμῳ πειρᾶσθαι ὑμῶν τῆς ἑκάστου βουλήσεώς τε καὶ δόξης τυχεῖν ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον.

this oration on the assumption that it is a fine thing for a speech to be pronounced over the war dead. Personally, I should have thought that honors rendered with actions, such as the organized state funeral you are now witnessing, would have sufficed for men who had proven their bravery by actions, and that proper recognition of the merits of many should not depend on a single man whose speech might go well or poorly.

It is a difficult task indeed to strike the right tone when the very plausibility of what you are saying is under scrutiny. Even an informed and sympathetic listener might find the speech insufficient on points he considers important and with which he is familiar, while someone unversed in these things might, out of envy, think some of it too extreme should he hear about achievements beyond his own capabilities. After all, people can only stand listening to praise of others so long as they think they might merit the same, whereas

[36] Ἄρξομαι δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν προγόνων πρῶτον· δίκαιον γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ πρέπον δὲ ἅμα ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε τὴν τιμὴν ταύτην τῆς μνήμης δίδοσθαι. τὴν γὰρ χώραν οἱ αὐτοὶ αἰεὶ οἰκοῦντες διαδοχῇ τῶν ἐπιγιγνομένων μέχρι τοῦδε ἐλευθέραν δι᾽ ἀρετὴν παρέδοσαν. καὶ ἐκεῖνοί τε ἄξιοι ἐπαίνου καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν· κτησάμενοι γὰρ πρὸς οἷς ἐδέξαντο ὅσην ἔχομεν ἀρχὴν οὐκ ἀπόνως, ἡμῖν τοῖς νῦν προσκατέλιπον. τὰ δὲ πλείω αὐτῆς αὐτοὶ ἡμεῖς οἵδε οἱ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες μάλιστα ἐν τῇ καθεστηκυίᾳ ἡλικίᾳ ἐπηυξήσαμεν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τοῖς πᾶσι παρεσκευάσαμεν καὶ ἐς πόλεμον καὶ ἐς εἰρήνην αὐταρκεστάτην.

excessive acclaim provokes jealousy and skepticism. Nevertheless, seeing as those who lived long ago thought it appropriate, I, too, must keep with tradition and attempt to satisfy your various wishes and expectations as best I can.

[36] I will begin first with our ancestors, for it is right and fitting that we honor their memory on this occasion. They dwelt continuously in this land, generation after generation, and by virtue of their excellence handed it down a free one still today. They deserve praise, but our fathers even more so, for beyond what they had inherited they secured the empire that we now possess and which they passed down to us at great effort. Those of us here now and not yet past our primes have also been responsible for expanding most parts of that empire and have ensured that the city is entirely capable of providing for itself in times of both peace and war.

῾Ων ἐγὼ τὰ μὲν κατὰ πολέμους ἔργα, οἷς ἕκαστα ἐκτήθη, εἴ τι αὐτοὶ ἢ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν βάρβαρον ἢ ῞Ελληνα πόλεμον ἐπιόντα προθύμως ἠμυνάμεθα, μακρηγορεῖν ἐν εἰδόσιν οὐ βουλόμενος, ἐάσω· ἀπὸ δὲ οἵας τε ἐπιτηδεύσεως ἤλθομεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὰ καὶ μεθ᾽ οἵας πολιτείας καὶ τρόπων ἐξ οἵων μεγάλα ἐγένετο, ταῦτα δηλώσας πρῶτον εἶμι καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν τῶνδε ἔπαινον, νομίζων ἐπί τε τῷ παρόντι οὐκ ἂν ἀπρεπῆ λεχθῆναι αὐτὰ καὶ τὸν πάντα ὅμιλον καὶ ἀστῶν καὶ ξένων ξύμφορον εἶναι ἐπακοῦσαι αὐτῶν.

[37] Χρώμεθα γὰρ πολιτείᾳ οὐ ζηλούσῃ τοὺς τῶν πέλας νόμους, παράδειγμα δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτοὶ ὄντες τισὶν ἢ μιμούμενοι ἑτέρους. καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ᾽ ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν

I will speak neither to our ancestors' achievements in war, to which we owe our various gains, nor of how our fathers readily drove back invasions by barbarian and Greek forces, for I do not want to dwell on such things before a crowd that already knows them well. Instead, before I praise the men who lie here, I want to offer an account of the principles that have gotten us this far and of the institutions and other qualities that are responsible for our greatness. I think that at this moment it would be especially appropriate for a few words to be said on these matters and that everyone in the crowd, Athenians and foreigners alike, would do well to pay attention.

[37] We have a system of government that does not take its cues from the laws of neighboring states; we set the example and do not imitate others. That system goes by the name of

δημοκρατία κέκληται, μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἔν τῳ εὐδοκιμεῖ, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλέον ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ᾽ ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ᾽ αὖ κατὰ πενίαν, ἔχων δέ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανείᾳ κεκώλυται.

᾽Ελευθέρως δὲ τά τε πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν πολιτεύομεν καὶ ἐς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους τῶν καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ὑποψίαν, οὐ δι᾽ ὀργῆς τὸν πέλας, εἰ καθ᾽ ἡδονήν τι δρᾷ, ἔχοντες, οὐδὲ ἀζημίους μέν, λυπηρὰς δὲ τῇ ὄψει ἀχθηδόνας προστιθέμενοι. ἀνεπαχθῶς δὲ τὰ ἴδια προσομιλοῦντες τὰ δημόσια διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν, τῶν τε αἰεὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντων ἀκροάσει καὶ τῶν νόμων, καὶ μάλιστα αὐτῶν ὅσοι τε ἐπ᾽ ὠφελίᾳ τῶν ἀδικουμένων κεῖνται καὶ ὅσοι ἄγραφοι ὄντες αἰσχύνην ὁμολογουμένην φέρουσιν.

democracy because it is administered on behalf of the many and not the few. Everyone enjoys equality before the law on matters of civil disputes. As to personal reputation, whoever wins esteem for some reason can advance in public affairs—not by turn, but through merit. And as to poverty, no one who is able to perform a good service for the city is prevented by his humble station from doing so.

We run our public life with an open mind, which is why we do not regard each other with suspicion over everyday matters. We do not get angry at neighbors who do things their own way; nor do we shoot each other those kinds of irritated looks that are ultimately harmless but hurtful all the same. Though we conduct our private lives without offense, we have fear to thank for the fact that we are so law-abiding. Fear is what drives us to obey our leaders and

[38] Καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν πόνων πλείστας ἀναπαύλας τῇ γνώμῃ ἐπορισάμεθα, ἀγῶσι μέν γε καὶ θυσίαις διετησίοις νομίζοντες, ἰδίαις δὲ κατασκευαῖς εὐπρεπέσιν, ὧν καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἡ τέρψις τὸ λυπηρὸν ἐκπλήσσει. ἐπεσέρχεται δὲ διὰ μέγεθος τῆς πόλεως ἐκ πάσης γῆς τὰ πάντα, καὶ ξυμβαίνει ἡμῖν μηδὲν οἰκειοτέρᾳ τῇ ἀπολαύσει τὰ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὰ γιγνόμενα καρποῦσθαι ἢ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων.

[39] Διαφέρομεν δὲ κἀν ταῖς τῶν πολεμικῶν μελέταις τῶν ἐναντίων τοῖσδε. τήν τε γὰρ πόλιν κοινὴν παρέχομεν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε ξενηλασίαις ἀπείργομέν τινα ἢ μαθήματος ἢ θεάματος, ὃ μὴ κρυφθὲν ἄν τις τῶν πολεμίων ἰδὼν ὠφεληθείη,

our laws—fear especially of the laws that exist to protect victims and of those which, though unwritten, are known to bring disgrace if broken.

[38] Furthermore, we have many ways of resting our spirits from work, in the form of the games and public sacrifices that we hold throughout the year but also at our refined private establishments where good cheer relieves stress every day. Because of the size of our city we have access to everything the world has to offer, which means that we are used to enjoying foreign goods no less than those produced here at home.

[39] We also differ from our enemies in our approach to military affairs. We open our city to everyone and do not expel foreigners who wish to study or to take in a spectacle. Though an enemy might stand to gain from this lack of

πιστεύοντες οὐ ταῖς παρασκευαῖς τὸ πλέον καὶ ἀπάταις ἢ τῷ ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐς τὰ ἔργα εὐψύχῳ·

Καὶ ἐν ταῖς παιδείαις οἱ μὲν ἐπιπόνῳ ἀσκήσει εὐθὺς νέοι ὄντες τὸ ἀνδρεῖον μετέρχονται, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀνειμένως διαιτώμενοι οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους χωροῦμεν.τεκμήριον δέ· οὔτε γὰρ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καθ᾽ ἑαυτούς, μεθ᾽ ἁπάντων δὲ ἐς τὴν γῆν ἡμῶν στρατεύουσι, τήν τε τῶν πέλας αὐτοὶ ἐπελθόντες οὐ χαλεπῶς ἐν τῇ ἀλλοτρίᾳ τοὺς περὶ τῶν οἰκείων ἀμυνομένους μαχόμενοι τὰ πλείω κρατοῦμεν·

Ἀθρόᾳ τε τῇ δυνάμει ἡμῶν οὐδείς πω πολέμιος ἐνέτυχε διὰ τὴν τοῦ ναυτικοῦ τε ἅμα ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ γῇ ἐπὶ πολλὰ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπίπεμψιν· ἢν δέ που μορίῳ τινὶ προσμείξωσι, κρατήσαντές τέ τινας ἡμῶν πάντας αὐχοῦσιν ἀπεῶσθαι καὶ νικηθέντες ὑφ᾽ ἁπάντων ἡσσῆσθαι. καίτοι εἰ ῥᾳθυμίᾳ μᾶλλον ἢ πόνων μελέτῃ καὶ μὴ μετὰ νόμων τὸ πλέον ἢ τρόπων ἀνδρείας ἐθέλομεν κινδυνεύειν, περιγίγνεται ἡμῖν τοῖς τε μέλλουσιν

secrecy, we set our stakes not so much in stratagems and deceit as in our people's courage to act.

As for education, in other societies they begin arduous training for manhood right from youth. We, by contrast, lead more leisurely lives, but are nevertheless just as capable of confronting equally formidable dangers. This is the proof: the Spartans have not invaded our land alone but have come with all their allies, whereas we have no difficulty invading a neighboring country by ourselves and are typically victorious on foreign soil, where our opponents are fighting to defend their own property.

In fact, no enemy has ever faced our full combined forces because we take such pains with our navy and dispatch infantry to so many places. This means that, whenever our enemies confront some tiny fraction of our military and win, they boast that they have routed us all when they have really only bested a few of us.

ἀλγεινοῖς μὴ προκάμνειν, καὶ ἐς αὐτὰ ἐλθοῦσι μὴ ἀτολμοτέρους τῶν αἰεὶ μοχθούντων φαίνεσθαι, καὶ ἔν τε τούτοις τὴν πόλιν ἀξίαν εἶναι θαυμάζεσθαι καὶ ἔτι ἐν ἄλλοις.

[40] Φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ᾽ εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας· πλούτῳ τε ἔργου μᾶλλον καιρῷ ἢ λόγου κόμπῳ χρώμεθα, καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι οὐχ ὁμολογεῖν τινι αἰσχρόν, ἀλλὰ μὴ διαφεύγειν ἔργῳ αἴσχιον. ἔνι τε τοῖς αὐτοῖς οἰκείων ἅμα καὶ πολιτικῶν ἐπιμέλεια καὶ ἑτέροις πρὸς ἔργα τετραμμένοις τὰ πολιτικὰ μὴ ἐνδεῶς γνῶναι·

Likewise, if they lose, they claim that they were defeated by our whole number. Because, moreover, our willingness to face danger is rooted in a life of ease rather than obsession with labor and in courage derived not from regulations but from character, we do not wear ourselves out with making preparations for future dangers—yet still we go to face those dangers with no less bravery than those who seem to be constantly in training. And these are not the only reasons our city deserves admiration; there are still others, too.

[40] We pursue beauty without extravagance and cultivate wisdom without being effete. We regard our wealth as a means for action and not as a reason to brag. No one sees poverty itself as shameful—the real shame lies in not taking steps to escape it. Finally, those who manage our civic life are equally attentive to their private

Μόνοι γὰρ τόν τε μηδὲν τῶνδε μετέχοντα οὐκ ἀπράγμονα, ἀλλ᾽ ἀχρεῖον νομίζομεν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἤτοι κρίνσμέν γε ἢ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὀρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προδιδαχθῆναι μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ἃ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν. διαφερόντως γὰρ δὴ καὶ τόδε ἔχομεν ὥστε τολμᾶν τε οἱ αὐτοὶ μάλιστα καὶ περὶ ὧν ἐπιχειρήσομεν ἐκλογίζεσθαι· ὃ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀμαθία μὲν θράσος, λογισμὸς δὲ ὄκνον φέρει. κράτιστοι δ᾽ ἂν ψυχὴν δικαίως κριθεῖεν οἱ τά τε δεινὰ καὶ ἡδέα σαφέστατα γιγνώσκοντες καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μὴ ἀποτρεπόμενοι ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων.

Καὶ τὰ ἐς ἀρετὴν ἐνηντιώμεθα τοῖς πολλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ πάσχοντες εὖ, ἀλλὰ δρῶντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους. βεβαιότερος δὲ ὁ δράσας τὴν χάριν ὥστε ὠφειλομένην δι᾽ εὐνοίας ᾧ δέδωκε σῴζειν· ὁ δὲ ἀντοφείλων ἀμβλύτερος, εἰδὼς οὐκ ἐς χάριν, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ὀφείλημα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσων. καὶ μόνοι οὐ

affairs while those wrapped up in their own pursuits are also well-informed about politics.

We are the only ones who do not see lack of public participation as minding your own business: we regard such non-participants as useless. We also take care to decide—or at least carefully deliberate on—public matters for ourselves, for we do not see discussion as an impediment to action but think it worse to act precipitously without the benefit of first informing ourselves by prior debate. We are unique, too, in that we strive to be at once daring and reflective in our planning; elsewhere boldness is attended by ignorance or else overanalysis breeds hesitation to act. Those who fully grasp the difference between what should be feared and what should be savored and do not shrink from danger because of it would rightly be judged the stoutest of heart.

τοῦ ξυμφέροντος μᾶλλον λογισμῷ ἢ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῷ πιστῷ ἀδεῶς τινα ὠφελοῦμεν.

[41] Ξυνελών τε λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι καὶ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον δοκεῖν ἄν μοι τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ πλεῖστ᾽ ἂν εἴδη καὶ μετὰ χαρίτων μάλιστ᾽ ἂν εὐτραπέλως τὸ σῶμα αὔταρκες παρέχεσθαι. καὶ ὡς οὐ λόγων ἐν τῷ παρόντι κόμπος τάδε μᾶλλον ἢ ἔργων ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, αὐτὴ ἡ δύναμις τῆς πόλεως, ἣν ἀπὸ

Our approach to good deeds is also the opposite of most other people's: we make friends not by receiving favors but by granting them. Admittedly, the granter of the favor is the surer friend, in that the kindness he showed means that he retains a right to the other's gratitude. The recipient, by contrast, is usually less enthusiastic, since he knows that it is not really a favor that he must repay but a debt of obligation. Nevertheless, we are the only people who aid others not out of some calculation of self-interest, but out of fearlessness, and with faith in our own liberty.

[41] In sum, what I am saying is that the city as a whole is an instructive model for Greece and, in terms of individuals, I think that a single man from our number would show himself self-sufficient in nearly all respects and with versatile charm at that. The fact that this is no mere empty boast uttered for the present occasion but the

τῶνδε τῶν τρόπων ἐκτησάμεθα, σημαίνει. μόνη γὰρ τῶν νῦν ἀκοῆς κρείσσων ἐς πεῖραν ἔρχεται, καὶ μόνη οὔτε τῷ πολεμίῳ ἐπελθόντι ἀγανάκτησιν ἔχει ὑφ᾽ οἵων κακοπαθεῖ, οὔτε τῷ ὑπηκόῳ κατάμεμψιν ὡς οὐχ ὑπὸ ἀξίων ἄρχεται.

Μετὰ μεγάλων δὲ σημείων καὶ οὐ δή τοι ἀμάρτυρόν γε τὴν δύναμιν παρασχόμενοι τοῖς τε νῦν καὶ τοῖς ἔπειτα θαυμασθησόμεθα, οὐδὲν προσδεόμενοι οὔτε Ὁμήρου ἐπαινέτου οὔτε ὅστις ἔπεσι μὲν τὸ αὐτίκα τέρψει, τῶν δ᾽ ἔργων τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ἡ ἀλήθεια βλάψει, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν μὲν θάλασσαν καὶ γῆν ἐσβατὸν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τόλμῃ καταναγκάσαντες γενέσθαι, πανταχοῦ δὲ μνημεῖα κακῶν τε κἀγαθῶν ἀίδια ξυγκατοικίσαντες.

Περὶ τοιαύτης οὖν πόλεως οἵδε τε γενναίως δικαιοῦντες μὴ ἀφαιρεθῆναι αὐτὴν μαχόμενοι ἐτελεύτησαν, καὶ τῶν λειπομένων πάντα τινὰ εἰκὸς ἐθέλειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς κάμνειν.

real truth of the matter is borne out by the city's power, which we have attained because of the very traits that I have described. For our city is the only one that, when put to the test, proves even greater than its reputation would suggest. It is also the only one that enemies on the attack never resent for the manner of men who bring about their defeat and that subject states never accuse of being unworthy to rule.

We enjoy admiration now and will continue to do so in future generations because we bear witness to our power with great monuments. We have no need, then, of a Homer's praise, nor of anyone to entertain us momentarily with poetic verses and claims that can only ever be undermined by the actual truth of matters. By our daring we have made the whole sea and earth ours to traverse and have established everlasting monuments to both our reprisals and our benefactions in all corners of the world.

[42] Δι᾽ ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐμήκυνα τὰ περὶ τῆς πόλεως, διδασκαλίαν τε ποιούμενος μὴ περὶ ἴσ ου ἡμῖν εἶναι τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ οἷς τῶνδε μηδὲν ὑπάρχει ὁμοίως, καὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν ἅμα ἐφ᾽ οἷς νῦν λέγω φανερὰν σημείοις καθιστάς.

Καὶ εἴρηται αὐτῆς τὰ μέγιστα· ἃ γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ὕμνησα, αἱ τῶνδε καὶ τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀρεταὶ ἐκόσμησαν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν πολλοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἰσόρροπος ὥσπερ τῶνδε ὁ λόγος τῶν ἔργων φανείη. δοκεῖ δέ μοι δηλοῦν ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν πρώτη τε μηνύουσα καὶ τελευταία βεβαιοῦσα ἡ νῦν τῶνδε καταστροφή. καὶ γὰρ τοῖς τἆλλα χείροσι δίκαιον τὴν ἐς τοὺς πολέμους ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἀνδραγαθίαν προτίθεσθαι· ἀγαθῷ γὰρ

Such is the city that these men, in their desire not to see it vanish, so nobly fought and died for, and it is only fitting that each and every one of those who survive them should also wish to strive on its behalf.

[42] That, in fact, is the reason I have gone on at such length about the city: as a lesson in why this struggle means something different to us than it does to those who have no such good things to lose, and also to establish that there are manifest proofs for the eulogy that I am delivering over these men.

My most important points have now been covered, for it is the virtues of these men, and of others like them, which shed luster on those aspects of the city that I have praised. There are very few Greeks who would be capable of actually living up to their reputation as these men did. I think that what befell them offers both

κακὸν ἀφανίσαντες κοινῶς μᾶλλον ὠφέλησαν ἢ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἔβλαψαν.

Τῶνδε δὲ οὔτε πλούτου τις τὴν ἔτι ἀπόλαυσιν προτιμήσας ἐμαλακίσθη οὔτε πενίας ἐλπίδι, ὡς κἂν ἔτι διαφυγὼν αὐτὴν πλουτήσειεν, ἀναβολὴν τοῦ δεινοῦ ἐποιήσατο· τὴν δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων τιμωρίαν ποθεινοτέραν αὐτῶν λαβόντες καὶ κινδύνων ἅμα τόνδε κάλλιστον νομίσαντες ἐβουλήθησαν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοὺς μὲν τιμωρεῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ ἀφίεσθαι, ἐλπίδι μὲν τὸ ἀφανὲς τοῦ κατορθώσειν ἐπιτρέψαντες, ἔργῳ δὲ περὶ τοῦ ἤδη ὁρωμένου σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἀξιοῦντες πεποιθέναι· καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀμύνεσθαι καὶ παθεῖν κάλλιον ἡγησάμενοι ἢ τὸ ἐνδόντες σῴζεσθαι, τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν τοῦ λόγου ἔφυγον, τὸ δ᾽ ἔργον τῷ σώματι ὑπέμειναν, καὶ δι᾽ ἐλαχίστου καιροῦ τύχης ἅμα ἀκμῇ τῆς δόξης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ δέους ἀπηλλάγησαν.

the first indication and final confirmation of their worth, as it is only fair that valor displayed in war waged for the fatherland outweigh all other shortcomings. This right has cancelled out any past wrongs, for the service that they rendered collectively means more than any harm they did as individuals.

None of these men's resolve grew weak at the thought of their wealth and the sustained pleasures it promised, nor did any of them attempt to stave off danger because of poverty and their aspirations of one day escaping it and becoming rich. Instead they desired, more than anything else, to have vengeance against their enemies. And because they saw the risk that this would require as the most glorious one of all, with that thought in mind they resolved to seek their satisfaction and put off any other concerns. They consigned the uncertainty of success to hope and decided it best to have faith

[43] Καὶ οἵδε μὲν προσηκόντως τῇ πόλει τοιοίδε ἐγένοντο· τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς χρὴ ἀσφαλεστέραν μὲν εὔχεσθαι, ἀτολμοτέραν δὲ μηδὲν ἀξιοῦν τὴν ἐς· τοὺς πολεμίους διάνοιαν ἔχειν, σκοποῦντας μὴ λόγῳ μόνῳ τὴν ὠφελίαν, ἣν ἄν τις πρὸς οὐδὲν χεῖρον αὐτοὺς ὑμᾶς εἰδότας μηκύνοι, λέγων ὅσα ἐν τῷ τοὺς πολεμίους ἀμύνεσθαι ἀγαθὰ ἔνεστιν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς, καὶ ὅταν ὑμῖν μεγάλη δόξῃ εἶναι, ἐνθυμουμένους ὅτι τολμῶντες

in themselves in the matter that was at hand. Understanding full well that their lot was one of resistance and suffering and not one of survival purchased by surrender, the one thing they fled was dishonor itself. Their bodies stood fast in action and, in one brief and fateful moment, they gave up their lives at the very height not of fear but of glory.

[43] These men, such as I have described them, died in a manner worthy of their city. Those of us still here ought to pray for a safer fate, but we must also resolve to be no less courageous in our conviction against our enemies. Logic alone is not a sufficient means of contemplating the advantages of courage, which someone might elaborate to you at great length (though you know it perfectly well for yourselves) by saying how wonderful it is to defend yourself from enemies and so on. No, instead

καὶ γιγνώσκοντες τὰ δέοντα καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αἰσχυνόμενοι ἄνδρες αὐτὰ ἐκτήσαντο, καὶ ὁπότε καὶ πείρᾳ του σφαλεῖεν, οὐκ οὖν καὶ τὴν πόλιν γε τῆς σφετέρας ἀρετῆς ἀξιοῦντες στερίσκειν, κάλλιστον δὲ ἔρανον αὐτῇ προϊέμενοι.

Κοινῇ γὰρ τὰ σώματα διδόντες ἰδίᾳ τὸν ἀγήρων ἔπαινον ἐλάμβανον καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐπισημότατον, οὐκ ἐν ᾧ κεῖνται μᾶλλον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ᾧ ἡ δόξα αὐτῶν παρὰ τῷ ἐντυχόντι αἰεὶ καὶ λόγου καὶ ἔργου καιρῷ αἰείμνηστος καταλείπεται. ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος, καὶ οὐ στηλῶν μόνον ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ σημαίνει ἐπιγραφή, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ μὴ προσηκούσῃ ἄγραφος μνήμη παρ᾽ ἑκάστῳ τῆς γνώμης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ἔργου ἐνδιαιτᾶται.

Οὓς νῦν ὑμεῖς ζηλώσαντες καὶ τὸ εὔδαιμον τὸ ἐλεύθερον, τὸ δ᾽ ἐλεύθερον τὸ εὔψυχον κρίναντες, μὴ περιορᾶσθε τοὺς πολεμικοὺς κινδύνους. οὐ γὰρ οἱ κακοπραγοῦντες δικαιότερον ἀφειδοῖεν ἂν τοῦ βίου, οἷς ἐλπὶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ οἷς ἡ ἐναντία μεταβολὴ ἐν τῷ ζῆν ἔτι κινδυνεύεται καὶ

you must truly marvel every day at the power of the city and become to her as a lover. And when she appears great in your eyes, you must reflect that all this was gained by men who dared; who understood their obligations and displayed their honor with actions and who, if ever they were defeated, never once thought to deprive the city of their valor but always rendered to her the finest service.

Though they gave their lives together, they each receive undying praise and the most conspicuous of all tombs—I do not mean the tomb in which they lie, but the one where their glory remains always unforgotten, whenever the occasion for words or deeds arises. For the entire world is the tomb of illustrious men, and it is not only the inscriptions on monuments at home that attest to this. Even in foreign lands there dwells an unprinted memory, carved not in stone but in people's hearts.

ἐν οἷς μάλιστα μεγάλα τὰ διαφέροντα, ἤν τι πταίσωσιν. ἀλγεινοτέρα γὰρ ἀνδρί γε φρόνημα ἔχοντι ἡ μετὰ τοῦ μαλακισθῆναι κάκωσις ἢ ὁ μετὰ ῥώμης καὶ κοινῆς ἐλπίδος ἅμα γιγνόμενος ἀναίσθητος θάνατος.

[44] Δι᾽ ὅπερ καὶ τοὺς τῶνδε νῦν τοκέας, ὅσοι πάρεστε, οὐκ ὀλοφύρομαι μᾶλλον ἢ παραμυθήσομαι. ἐν πολυτρόποις γὰρ ξυμφοραῖς ἐπίστανται τραφέντες· τὸ δ᾽ εὐτυχές, οἳ ἂν τῆς εὐπρεπεστάτης λάχωσιν, ὥσπερ οἵδε μὲν νῦν, τελευτῆς, ὑμεῖς δὲ λύπης, καὶ οἷς ἐνευδαιμονῆσαί τε ὁ βίος ὁμοίως καὶ ἐντελευτῆσαι ξυνεμετρήθη.

You now must aspire to these men's example: understand that happiness is freedom and freedom courage, and do not shrink from the dangers of war. After all, it is no true sacrifice when the dispirited lay down their lives, for they have already abandoned hope. Instead, the finest sacrifice issues from those who wager their continued happiness and have the most to lose if they fail. To a sensible man, at least, the disgrace incurred by cowardice is far more painful than death which comes imperceptibly, at a moment of great might and shared aspirations.

[44] That is why I offer not tears but consolation to those bereaved parents here among us. They know well of life's twists and turns. They also know that true good fortune is to be granted a most illustrious death as in the case of the men who lie here, or—in your cases—a most illustrious grief. It also means winning a

χαλεπὸν μὲν οὖν οἶδα πείθειν ὅν, ὧν καὶ πολλάκις ἔξετε ὑπομνήματα ἐν ἄλλων εὐτυχίαις, αἷς ποτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἠγάλλεσθε· καὶ λύπη οὐχ ὧν ἄν τις μὴ πειρασάμενος ἀγαθῶν στερίσκηται, ἀλλ᾽ οὗ ἂν ἐθὰς γενόμενος ἀφαιρεθῇ.

Καρτερεῖν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ἄλλων παίδων ἐλπίδι οἷς ἔτι ἡλικία τέκνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι· ἰδίᾳ τε γὰρ τῶν οὐκ ὄντων λήθη οἱ ἐπιγιγνόμενοί τισιν ἔσονται, καὶ τῇ πόλει διχόθεν, ἔκ τε τοῦ μὴ ἐρημοῦσθαι καὶ ἀσφαλείᾳ, ξυνοίσει· οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἴσον τι ἢ δίκαιον βουλεύεσθαι οἳ ἂν μὴ καὶ παῖδας ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου παραβαλλόμενοι κινδυνεύωσιν. ὅσοι δ᾽ αὖ παρηβήκατε, τόν τε πλέονα κέρδος ὂν ηὐτυχεῖτε βίον ἡγεῖσθε καὶ τόνδε βραχὺν ἔσεσθαι, καὶ τῇ τῶνδε εὐκλείᾳ κουφίζεσθε. τὸ γὰρ φιλότιμον ἀγήρων μόνον, καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἀχρείῳ τῆς ἡλικίας τὸ κερδαίνειν, ὥσπερ τινές φασι, μᾶλλον τέρπει, ἀλλὰ τὸ τιμᾶσθαι.

lifetime fated to end while things are still going well. I do nevertheless realize that this is difficult to accept, for the good fortunes of others will often remind you of the blessings that you once enjoyed. Grief, in the end, does not come from losing a happiness you never knew but from being robbed of one you knew all too well.

Those of you still of an age to have more children should take heart in that hope. New children will help some parents to forget the ones they have lost and will provide a double benefit to the city as fresh sources of both population and security. Fair and just decisions, after all, cannot be made unless the people making them have children whose lives are equally at stake. On the other hand, those of you who are past that age must seek solace in the knowledge that the greater part of your life has been a boon and that thoughts of their glory will make what little is left more bearable. Love of

[45] Παισὶ δ᾽ αὖ ὅσοι τῶνδε πάρεστε ἢ ἀδελφοῖς ὁρῶ μέγαν τὸν ἀγῶνα (τὸν γὰρ οὐκ ὄντα ἅπας εἴωθεν ἐπαινεῖν), καὶ μόλις ἂν καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ἀρετῆς οὐχ ὁμοῖοι, ἀλλ᾽ ὀλίγῳ χείρους κριθεῖτε. φθόνος γὰρ τοῖς ζῶσι πρὸς τὸ ἀντίπαλον, τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐμποδὼν ἀνανταγωνίστῳ εὐνοίᾳ τετίμηται. Εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ᾽ ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς᾽ ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.

honor is the one thing that never grows old, and it is not wealth—as some people say—but honor that brings the most joy amid the frailty of age.

[45] As for you children and brothers of the dead here among us, I realize that a difficult struggle lies ahead of you, seeing as everyone tends to praise those who are no longer with us. Even if your own merit is truly exceptional you will hardly be thought to come close to these men, let alone be adjudged their equals. The living have a tendency to envy their competition but those who no longer present a challenge enjoy honor untainted by jealousy. Finally, if I must say something for the new widows here about what virtue means for women, I can put it all into one brief piece of advice. For you, the greater glory lies in not falling short of your womanly lot: in ensuring that men hardly ever

[46] Εἴρηται καὶ ἐμοὶ λόγῳ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὅσα εἶχον πρόσφορα, καὶ ἔργῳ οἱ θαπτόμενοι τὰ μὲν ἤδη κεκόσμηνται, τὰ δὲ αὐτῶν τοὺς παῖδας τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε δημοσίᾳ ἡ πόλις μέχρι ἥβης θρέψει, ὠφέλιμον στέφανον τοῖσδέ τε καὶ τοῖς λειπομένοις τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀγώνων προτιθεῖσα· ἆθλα γὰρ οἷς κεῖται ἀρετῆς μέγιστα, τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἄνδρες ἄριστοι πολιτεύουσιν.

Νῦν δὲ ἀπολοφυράμενοι ὃν προσήκει ἑκάστῳ ἄπιτε.

speak your name, whether in compliments or with criticism.

[46] I have now said what tradition dictates I should say in my speech. As for concrete action, the dead here have already received their due rites and the city pledges to support their children from now on at public expense until they come of age. Thus does the city offer worthy rewards for their struggles, both for the dead and for those they have left behind. To be sure, wherever the prizes for excellence are greatest, there too will you find the best citizens.

Now that you have finished mourning for your family members, it is time to depart.

On Holding the Course: Pericles' Last Speech (430 BCE)

In the summer of 430, a devastating plague, perhaps akin to typhoid fever, broke out in Athens. Thucydides reports that it was thought to have originated in Ethiopia; the disease then spread through Egypt and Libya and much of Persia before entering Athens through the port of Piraeus. The wartime advent of refugees into Athens from the Attic countryside only exacerbated the effects of the plague, which would eventually claim Pericles (Thucydides fell ill but survived). Thucydides notes that despair permeated the city, which descended into a degree of anarchy (2.47–55).

The Peloponnesians, meanwhile, continued their assault on Attica. In response, Pericles readied an armada of a hundred ships for dispatch to the Peloponnese where it laid waste to

a number of towns. The Peloponnesians then abandoned Attica after an assault that had lasted about forty days—their second attack on Athenian home territory and the longest of the war.

In the wake of that invasion, the distressed Athenians began to "change their minds" and to blame Pericles for what had befallen them, "given that he had persuaded them to go to war and it was because of him that they were suffering so much" (2.59). They even sent envoys to Sparta to negotiate peace, but those efforts failed. Pericles called an assembly at which he supposedly delivered this speech, his last in Thucydides' *History*, in the hopes of allaying his countrymen's fears and convincing them to stay the course and resist the temptation to surrender. His pleas were successful, and the

Athenians resolved to endure—but also to punish Pericles with a fine. Despite that, he was eventually reelected general, but he died of the plague less than a year later.

Here Pericles reprises earlier themes of his: the advantages of Athenian naval power and the duty of Athenians to preserve the glory and good name that their forefathers had sacrificed so much to establish. He also reasserts the necessity of full civic engagement for citizens who belong to a city—and imperial power—such as Athens. Those who would practice "apolitical" detachment from public affairs (i.e., the Athenian vice of *apragmosynē*) actually pose the greatest danger to the state. He further implies that peace, at this point, is impracticable, for "even if it was wrong to establish the empire in

the first place, letting it go now would be exceptionally dangerous" (1.63).

In the section of the *History* that immediately follows this speech (a passage known as Pericles' "obituary"), Thucydides will speculate

that the Athenians might not have lost the war had Pericles survived. There he will praise Pericles' moderation in the more peaceful era when Athenian power was at its height and assert the wisdom of his leadership and policy in war.

[60] Καὶ προσδεχομένῳ μοι τὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ὑμῶν ἔς με γεγένηται (αἰσθάνομαι γὰρ τὰς αἰτίας) καὶ ἐκκλησίαν τούτου ἕνεκα ξυνήγαγον, ὅπως ὑπομνήσω καὶ μέμψωμαι εἴ τι μὴ ὀρθῶς ἢ ἐμοὶ χαλεπαίνετε ἢ ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς εἴκετε. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι πόλιν πλείω ξύμπασαν ὀρθουμένην ὠφελεῖν τοὺς ἰδιώτας ἢ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τῶν πολιτῶν εὐπραγοῦσαν, ἁθρόαν δὲ σφαλλομένην. καλῶς μὲν γὰρ φερόμενος ἀνὴρ τὸ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν διαφθειρομένης τῆς πατρίδος οὐδὲν ἧσσον ξυναπόλλυται, κακοτυχῶν δὲ ἐν εὐτυχούσῃ πολλῷ μᾶλλον διασῴζεται. ὁπότε οὖν πόλις μὲν τὰς ἰδίας ξυμφορὰς οἵα τε φέρειν, εἷς δὲ ἕκαστος τὰς ἐκείνης ἀδύνατος, πῶς οὐ χρὴ πάντας ἀμύνειν αὐτῇ, καὶ μὴ ὃ νῦν ὑμεῖς δρᾶτε, ταῖς κατ᾽ οἶκον κακοπραγίαις ἐκπεπληγμένοι τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀφίεσθε, καὶ ἐμέ τε τὸν παραινέσαντα πολεμεῖν καὶ ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς οἳ ξυνέγνωτε δι᾽ αἰτίας ἔχετε.

ON HOLDING THE COURSE

History of the Peloponnesian War 2.60–64

[60] I had predicted that you would eventually become angry at me and I do understand your reasons. That is why I have called this assembly: to issue you with a reminder, as well as to reprimand you in case you are unduly irate with me and are considering giving way in the face of suffering. I am convinced that people are much better off when their whole city is flourishing than when certain citizens prosper but the community has gone off course. When a man is doing well for himself but his country is falling to pieces he goes to pieces along with it, but a struggling individual has much better hopes if his country is thriving. A city can bear its people's various sufferings but no single person can bear the whole city's, so you should all be working together to end them and quit what you are doing now: wallowing in your personal

Καίτοι ἐμοὶ τοιούτῳ ἀνδρὶ ὀργίζεσθε ὃς οὐδενὸς ἥσσων οἶομαι εἶναι γνῶναί τε τὰ δέοντα καὶ ἑρμηνεῦσαι ταῦτα, φιλόπολίς τε καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσων. ὅ τε γὰρ γνοὺς καὶ μὴ σαφῶς διδάξας ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐνεθυμήθη· ὅ τε ἔχων ἀμφότερα, τῇ δὲ πόλει δύσνους, οὐκ ἂν ὁμοίως τι οἰκείως φράξοι· προσόντος δὲ καὶ τοῦδε, χρήμασι δὲ νικωμένου, τὰ ξύμπαντα τούτου ἑνὸς ἂν πωλοῖτο. ὥστ᾽ εἴ μοι καὶ μέσως ἡγούμενοι μᾶλλον ἑτέρων προσεῖναι αὐτὰ πολεμεῖν ἐπείσθητε, οὐκ ἂν εἰκότως νῦν τοῦ γε ἀδικεῖν αἰτίαν φεροίμην.

miseries at the expense of collective recovery and blaming me for urging the war and your fellow citizens for agreeing to it.

Even so, you still are angry at me—I, who am just as qualified as anyone else to apprehend and articulate what we must do and am a patriot beyond all corruption. Someone who knew what we should do but was incapable of explaining it would clearly be just as useless as someone who had never given the matter any thought; if he could do both but was unfriendly toward the city, he could never act as a sincere advocate on its behalf; if, finally, he was a true patriot but still susceptible to bribery, then everything would be up for sale. So, if you believed that I, as opposed to anyone else, possessed some modicum of all of these qualities when you took my advice and first went to war, then it makes no sense for me to face accusations of wrongdoing now.

[61] Καὶ γὰρ οἷς μὲν αἵρεσις γεγένηται τἆλλα εὐτυχοῦσι, πολλὴ ἄνοια πολεμῆσαι· εἰ δ' ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἴξαντας εὐθὺς τοῖς πέλας ὑπακοῦσαι ἢ κινδυνεύσαντας περιγενέσθαι, ὁ φυγὼν τὸν κίνδυνον τοῦ ὑποστάντος μεμπτότερος. καὶ ἐγὼ μὲν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἐξίσταμαι· ὑμεῖς δὲ μεταβάλλετε, ἐπειδὴ ξυνέβη ὑμῖν πεισθῆναι μὲν ἀκεραίοις, μεταμέλειν δὲ κακουμένοις, καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον ἐν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἀσθενεῖ τῆς γνώμης μὴ ὀρθὸν φαίνεσθαι, διότι τὸ μὲν λυποῦν ἔχει ἤδη τὴν αἴσθησιν ἑκάστῳ, τῆς δὲ ὠφελίας ἄπεστιν ἔτι ἡ δήλωσις ἅπασι, καὶ μεταβολῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ταύτης ἐξ ὀλίγου, ἐμπεσούσης ταπεινὴ ὑμῶν ἡ διάνοια ἐγκαρτερεῖν ἃ ἔγνωτε. δουλοῖ γὰρ φρόνημα τὸ αἰφνίδιον καὶ ἀπροσδόκητον καὶ τὸ πλείστῳ παραλόγῳ ξυμβαῖνον· ὃ ἡμῖν πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐχ ἥκιστα καὶ κατὰ τὴν νόσον γεγένηται.

Ὅμως δὲ πόλιν μεγάλην οἰκοῦντας καὶ ἐν ἤθεσιν ἀντιπάλοις αὐτῇ τεθραμμένους χρεὼν καὶ ξυμφοραῖς ταῖς μεγίσταις ἐθέλειν ὑφίστασθαι καὶ

[61] If, moreover, you have a choice in the matter and things are fine as they are, then there is absolutely no sense in going to war. But when the options are either to yield and submit to the enemy or to confront danger and hope to prevail, in such circumstances fleeing the danger becomes more reprehensible than facing it. I am the same person I always was and have not changed my position. It is you who are fickle, seeing as you listened to me as long as no harm came to you but regret it now that you are hurting. Apparently, the real flaw in my policy is the weakness of your resolve; everyone is enduring the pain that the policy entails but no one yet grasps what the payoff will be. Because you have experienced such an enormous reversal of fortune in a very short space of time you find yourselves too disheartened to keep to the course that you chose. Peoples' spirits fall prey to anything that is sudden, unexpected, and

τὴν ἀξίωσιν μὴ ἀφανίζειν (ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι δικαιοῦσι τῆς τε ὑπαρχούσης δόξης αἰτιᾶσθαι ὅστις μαλακίᾳ ἐλλείπει καὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μισεῖν τὸν θρασύτητι ὀρεγόμενον), ἀπαλκγήσαντας δὲ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι.

[62] Τὸν δὲ πόνον τὸν κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον, μὴ γένηταί τε πολὺς καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον περιγενώμεθα, ἀρκείτω μὲν ὑμῖν καὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐν οἷς ἄλλοτε πολλάκις γε δὴ ἀπέδειξα οὐκ ὀρθῶς αὐτὸν ὑποπτευόμενον,

entirely unforeseen, which is precisely what has now happened to you on various counts—not least of all in respect to the plague.

Nevertheless, you live in a great city and were brought up on principles equally great. This means that you need to be willing to endure the most trying of circumstances if it means preserving your standing in the world. People are just as inclined to pass judgment on anyone who, out of weakness, fails to live up to their reputation as they are to despise anyone arrogant enough to aspire to more than they really deserve. Now you have to put aside all thoughts of your personal sorrows and think only of what you can do to save the whole.

[62] You are afraid that we will lose even if we make a great war effort. Only think of what I said on so many other occasions when I explained why that fear is misplaced! And now I

δηλώσω δὲ καὶ τόδε, ὅ μοι δοκεῖτε οὔτ᾽ αὐτοὶ πώποτε ἐνθυμηθῆναι ὑπάρχον ὑμῖν μεγέθους πέρι ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν οὔτ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖς πρὶν λόγοις· οὐδ᾽ ἂν νῦν ἐχρησάμην κομπωδεστέραν ἔχοντι τὴν προσποίησιν, εἰ μὴ καταπεπληγμένους ὑμᾶς παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἑώρων.

Οἴεσθε μὲν γὰρ τῶν ξυμμάχων μόνων ἄρχειν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποφαίνω δύο μερῶν τῶν ἐς χρῆσιν φανερῶν, γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὑμᾶς παντὸς κυριωτάτους ὄντας, ἐφ᾽ ὅσον τε νῦν νέμεσθε καὶ ἢν ἐπὶ πλέον βουληθῆτε· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις τῇ ὑπαρχούσῃ παρασκευῇ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ πλέοντας ὑμᾶς οὔτε βασιλεὺς οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἔθνος τῶν ἐν τῷ παρόντι κωλύσει. ὥστε οὐ κατὰ τὴν τῶν οἰκιῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς χρείαν, ὧν μεγάλων νομίζετε ἐστερῆσθαι, αὕτη ἡ δύναμις φαίνεται· οὐδ᾽ εἰκὸς χαλεπῶς φέρειν αὐτῶν μᾶλλον ἢ οὐ κηπίον καὶ ἐγκαλλώπισμα πλούτου πρὸς ταύτην νομίσαντας ὀλιγωρῆσαι καὶ γνῶναι ἐλευθερίαν μέν, ἢν ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι αὐτῆς᾽

will add another reason as well, an advantage that has to do with size of our empire but which you seem never to have considered—and which I never mentioned, either, in my previous speeches. Indeed, I would not be about to make such a bold claim now if it were not for how utterly panicked you seem.

You think that the reach of your empire extends merely over your allies, but let me tell you that there are two clear theaters in play: the land and the sea. You are entirely in command of one of them—the sea—inasmuch as you control it already, but you could be even more so if you wanted to. There is no one, neither the King of Persia nor any nation on earth, who could stop you from sailing with the naval outfit you currently possess. This is not the kind of power that is evident from a tally of houses and land, the sorts of things whose loss you regard so fatal. You should not take those losses so hard.

διασώσωμεν, ῥαδίως ταῦτα ἀναληψομένην, ἄλλων δὲ ὑπακούσασι καὶ τὰ προκεκτημένα φιλεῖν ἐλασσοῦσθαι, τῶν τε πατέρων μὴ χείρους κατ᾽ ἀμφότερα φανῆναι, οἳ μετὰ πόνων καὶ οὐ παρ᾽ ἄλλων δεξάμενοι κατέσχον τε καὶ προσέτι διασώσαντες παρέδοσαν ὑμῖν αὐτά (αἴσχιον δὲ ἔχοντας ἀφαιρεθῆναι ἢ κτωμένους ἀτυχῆσαι), ἰέναι δὲ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ὁμόσε μὴ φρονήματι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταφρονήματι. αὔχημα μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἀπὸ ἀμαθίας εὐτυχοῦς καὶ δειλῷ τινι ἐγγίγνεται, καταφρόνησις δὲ ὃς ἂν καὶ γνώμῃ πιστεύῃ τῶν ἐναντίων περιέχειν, ὃ ἡμῖν ὑπάρχει. καὶ τὴν τόλμαν ἀπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας τύχης ἡ ξύνεσις ἐκ τοῦ ὑπέρφρονος ἐχυρωτέραν παρέχεται, ἐλπίδι τε ἧσσον πιστεύει, ἧς ἐν τῷ ἀπόρῳ ἡ ἰσχύς, γνώμῃ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων, ἧς βεβαιοτέρα ἡ πρόνοια.

Think of those things as you would a little garden—wealth's mere frills—and value them just as little. Know too that freedom, which we will preserve by our efforts, will easily recover all that, but people who surrender tend to lose even what little they had left. On both counts, then, you must prove yourselves no worse than your fathers, for it was through their own efforts and nobody else's that they attained all this and preserved it to hand down to you. After all, it is even more shameful to be stripped of what you have than it is to fail at attempts to acquire more. You need, then, to go to face your enemies with a spirit not merely of courage but of contempt. Pride is a byproduct of blissful ignorance and a quality inherent to cowards, but the right to disdain is reserved for those who have reasonable grounds to believe, as we do, that they are better than their enemies. Besides, when luck is the same on both sides, knowledge, with the

[63] Τῆς τε πόλεως ὑμᾶς εἰκὸς τῷ τιμωμένῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄρχειν, ᾧπερ ἅπαντες ἀγάλλεσθε, βοηθεῖν, καὶ μὴ φεύγειν τοὺς πόνους ἢ μηδὲ τὰς τιμὰς διώκειν· μηδὲ νομίσαι περὶ ἑνὸς μόνου, δουλείας ἀντ᾽ ἐλευθερίας, ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχῆς στερήσεως καὶ κινδύνου ὧν ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ ἀπήχθεσθε. ἧς οὐδ᾽ ἐκστῆναι ἔτι ὑμῖν ἔστιν, εἴ τις καὶ τόδε ἐν τῷ παρόντι δεδιὼς ἀπραγμοσύνῃ ἀνδραγαθίζεται· ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον. τάχιστ᾽ ἄν τε πόλιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἑτέρους τε πείσαντες ἀπολέσειαν καὶ εἴ που ἐπὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν αὐτόνομοι οἰκήσειαν· τὸ γὰρ

confidence it has in its own superiority, provides even firmer grounds for courage. That is because knowledge depends not on hope, which takes its strength from our helplessness, but on something more solid: the foresight of judgment that is actually grounded in reality.

[63] It is only right that you aid the city in maintaining the prestige that accrues to it from the empire and in which you all revel. You cannot shirk from the efforts that this requires and still seek a share in the honor. And do not think that you are fighting merely for freedom as opposed to slavery: you are also contending with loss of empire and with the perilous hatred that you have already incurred thanks to your rule. Avoidance is no longer an option, in case any of you is so afraid of the present circumstances that you think to play the upright citizen by keeping out of all this. You already wield the

ἄπραγμον οὐ σῴζεται μὴ μετὰ τοῦ δραστηρίου τεταγμένον, οὐδὲ ἐν ἀρχούσῃ πόλει ξυμφέρει, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ὑπηκόῳ, ἀσφαλῶς δουλεύειν.

[64] Ὑμεῖς δὲ μήτε ὑπὸ τῶν τοιῶνδε πολιτῶν παράγεσθε μήτε ἐμὲ δι᾽ ὀργῆς ἔχετε, ᾧ καὶ αὐτοὶ ξυνδιέγνωτε πολεμεῖν, εἰ καὶ ἐπελθόντες οἱ ἐναντίοι ἔδρασαν ἅπερ εἰκὸς ἦν μὴ ἐθελησάντων ὑμῶν ὑπακούειν, ἐπιγεγένηταί τε πέρα ὧν προσεδεχόμεθα ἡ νόσος ἥδε, πρᾶγμα μόνον δὴ τῶν πάντων ἐλπίδος κρεῖσσον γεγενημένον. καὶ

equivalent of a tyranny; even if you think it was wrong to establish the empire in the first place, letting it go now would be exceptionally dangerous. Citizens who refused to take part in such matters would, once they had convinced others to join them, quickly ruin the state, even if they just kept to themselves and led their lives entirely at a remove. One person's disengagement is untenable unless bolstered by someone else's commitment. That approach is of no use for running an empire and is only productive in circumstances of subjection; for safely enduring slavery.

[64] Do not, then, be swayed by these kinds of citizens and do not be angry with me—after all, you voted to declare war, too—even though our enemies reacted just as expected when we refused to obey them and now we have this plague on our hands, the one thing no one could have predicted. I know that you hate me even

δι' αὐτὴν οἶδ' ὅτι μέρος τι μᾶλλον ἔτι μισοῦμαι, οὐ δικαίως, εἰ μὴ καὶ ὅταν παρὰ λόγον τι εὖ πράξητε ἐμοὶ ἀναθήσετε. φέρειν δὲ χρὴ τά τε δαιμόνια ἀναγκαίως τά τε ἀπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἀνδρείως· ταῦτα γὰρ ἐν ἔθει τῇδε τῇ πόλει πρότερόν τε ἦν νῦν τε μὴ ἐν ὑμῖν κωλυθῇ.

Γνῶτε δὲ ὄνομα μέγιστον αὐτὴν ἔχουσαν ἐν ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις διὰ τὸ ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς μὴ εἴκειν, πλεῖστα δὲ σώματα καὶ πόνους ἀνηλωκέναι πολέμῳ, καὶ δύναμιν μεγίστην δὴ μέχρι τοῦδε κεκτημένην, ἧς ἐς ἀίδιον τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις, ἢν καὶ νῦν ὑπενδῶμέν ποτε (πάντα γὰρ πέφυκε καὶ ἐλασσοῦσθαι), μνήμη καταλελείψεται, Ἑλλήνων τε ὅτι Ἕλληνες πλείστων δὴ ἤρξαμεν καὶ πολέμοις μεγίστοις ἀντέσχομεν πρός τε ξύμπαντας καὶ καθ' ἑκάστους, πόλιν τε τοῖς πᾶσιν εὐπορωτάτην καὶ μεγίστην ᾠκήσαμεν. καίτοι ταῦτα ὁ μὲν ἀπράγμων μέμψαιτ' ἄν, ὁ δὲ δρᾶν τι καὶ αὐτὸς βουλόμενος ζηλώσει· εἰ δέ τις μὴ κέκτηται, φθονήσει. τὸ δὲ μισεῖσθαι καὶ λυπηροὺς εἶναι ἐν

more because of it, but that is unfair, unless you also plan to give me the credit if things should all of a sudden look up. We have to face what heaven sends with acquiescence and what our enemies send with courage. That is how we used to do things in this city, so nothing should stop you from bearing up in that way now.

Understand that Athens' name is the greatest in the world precisely because it does not yield to circumstance and because it expends more bodies and effort on war than any other state. Understand, too, that it has amassed the greatest power that the world has ever known and, even if we pass away someday (for everything eventually fades), future generations will forever remember how we ruled over more fellow Greeks than did anyone else, how we withstood the greatest wars against their combined and separate forces, and how we dwelt in the most prosperous and mightiest of cities. While people

τῷ παρόντι πᾶσι μὲν ὑπῆρξε δὴ ὅσοι ἕτεροι ἑτέρων ἠξίωσαν ἄρχειν· ὅστις δὲ ἐπὶ μεγίστοις τὸ ἐπίφθονον λαμβάνει, ὀρθῶς βουλεύεται. μῖσος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀντέχει, ἡ δὲ παραυτίκα τε λαμπρότης καὶ ἐς τὸ ἔπειτα δόξα αἰείμνηστος καταλείπεται.

Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔς τε τὸ μέλλον καλὸν προγνόντες ἔς τε τὸ αὐτίκα μὴ αἰσχρὸν τῷ ἤδη προθύμῳ ἀμφότερα κτήσασθε, καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις μήτε ἐπικηρυκεύεσθε μήτε ἔνδηλοι ἔστε τοῖς παροῦσι πόνοις βαρυνόμενοι, ὡς οἵτινες πρὸς τὰς ξυμφορὰς γνώμῃ μὲν ἥκιστα λυποῦνται, ἔργῳ δὲ μάλιστα ἀντέχουσιν, οὗτοι καὶ πόλεων καὶ ἰδιωτῶν κράτιστοί εἰσιν.

who elect to lead quiet lives might find fault with those kinds of qualities, those who wish to lead lives of accomplishment will aspire to them and will resent it if they fail to achieve them. All who would dare to rule others incur hatred and inflict distress in the short term and the people who have it right are those who accept that unpopularity is the price of greatness. Hatred is fleeting, but even momentary splendor leaves an enduring fame that forever persists in memory.

That being the case, you must determine what will be good for us in the long term and what will keep us from disgrace at this moment and make a commitment to both. Do not send heralds to Sparta; do not let them see how weighed down you are by your suffering. In the face of dire circumstances, those who grieve least in their hearts are the ones capable of taking action that empowers them to withstand the most. They are the strongest kinds of cities and people alike.

On Realpolitik: The Mytilenean Debate (427 BCE)

During the fourth summer of the war, in 428, Mytilene, a city on the eastern Aegean island of Lesbos, led an attempt at secession from alliance with Athens. At great expense and with help from the other allies, the Athenians blockaded the island. Meanwhile, at a celebration of the Olympics, Mytilenean envoys made a plea to the Peloponnesians. They cited Athens' untrustworthiness and tyrannical treatment of its allies and outlined the practical benefits that an alliance with Mytilene would bring (3.9–14). Sparta was persuaded. By the end of the winter, the Spartans dispatched a man named Salaethus ahead to Mytilene, where he informed the local leaders that relief was on its way. The Mytileneans were heartened and so ceased

to negotiate with Athens. The next summer, in 427, Sparta dispatched a fleet of forty-two ships to Mytilene and simultaneously launched another, even more destructive, invasion of Attica (3.25–6).

The Spartan ships, however, were delayed in reaching Mytilene. Salaethus gave up on waiting for them and distributed arms to the suffering people so that they might rise up against Athens. The people instead turned against the ruling oligarchs and threatened to deliver the city up to Athens if stored-up food was not distributed. Powerless to do anything, the oligarchs joined with the people and surrendered to Paches, the Athenian general in control of the island, on the condition that they be permitted to send an embassy to Athens to make their case there (3.28). Eventually, Paches apprehended Salaethus and extradited both him and

the Mytilenean oligarchs he thought responsible for the revolt to Athens. Salaethus was at once put to death; after a debate, the Athenians resolved not only to execute the rest of the prisoners but also to kill all of the men of Mytilene and enslave the women and children. They dispatched a trireme to the island bearing those orders (3.35–6).

The next day, however, they reconsidered and realized that they had made a "brutal decision to destroy the entire city, instead of just the guilty parties." Mytilenean envoys worked together with certain sympathetic Athenians to reopen the matter. In the assembly meeting that followed, one of the leading speakers was Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus, a notorious demagogue "who had prevailed in his earlier motion for the death penalty, and was generally the most violent of all the citizens and the most effective

at persuading the people" (3.36). We know nothing, by contrast, of Diodotus, the son of Eucrates, who is Cleon's opponent in this debate.

Cleon begins his speech with the provocative point that a democracy is incapable of running an empire; he also, however, calls Athens' empire a tyranny, just as Pericles—a leader so different in character—had done in his last speech (2.63; see On Holding the Course: Pericles' Last Speech). He then issues a warning about the dangers of spectacular oratory and goes on to argue that destroying Mytilene will be both objectively just (given the Mytileneans' crime) and advantageous for Athens. Diodotus, too, frames his position in terms of Athenian interests, but contends that inflicting such a harsh punishment on Mytilene will ultimately bring the greatest harm upon Athens itself. He emphasizes the

wisdom of the deliberative process (as Pericles had done in his Funeral Oration: 2.40; see "On Dying for Your Country: Pericles' Funeral Oration") and its power to signal the purpose with which Athens acts.

Like the Melian Dialogue ("On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue"), this debate is often read as a key document in the history of political Realism. Both Cleon's and Diodotus' speeches are structured by reflections on how concerns for "justice" (*to dikaion*) and "expediency" (*to sumpheron*) ought to be weighed in matters of foreign policy. Cleon insists that mercy and leniency are detrimental to empire, but in his speech Diodotus never claims that the Mytileneans should be spared on purely ethical grounds (Cleon's speech may, however, imply that Diodotus had previously made that case): Diodotus' argument is not that killing

the Mytileneans would be unjust, but that it would be disadvantageous to Athens. But Thucydides' narrative suggests that certain Athenians were indeed morally opposed to the "brutal decision to destroy the entire city."

This is a point of which he subtly, but significantly, reminds us immediately after the debate, when he alludes to the heavy hearts of the rowers initially dispatched to bear the bad news to Mytilene (3.49).

[37] Πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη ἔγωγε καὶ ἄλλοτε ἔγνων δημοκρατίαν ὅτι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ἑτέρων ἄρχειν, μάλιστα δ᾽ ἐν τῇ νῦν ὑμετέρᾳ περὶ Μυτιληναίων μεταμελείᾳ. διὰ γὰρ τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἀδεὲς καὶ ἀνεπιβούλευτον πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐς τοὺς ξυμμάχους τὸ αὐτὸ ἔχετε, καὶ ὅ τι ἂν ἢ λόγῳ πεισθέντες ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἁμάρτητε ἢ οἴκτῳ ἐνδῶτε, οὐκ ἐπικινδύνως ἡγεῖσθε ἐς ὑμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἐς τὴν τῶν ξυμμάχων χάριν μαλακίζεσθαι, οὐ σκοποῦντες ὅτι τυραννίδα ἔχετε τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ πρὸς ἐπιβουλεύοντας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἄκοντας ἀρχομένους, οἳ οὐκ ἐξ ὧν ἂν χαρίζησθε βλαπτόμενοι αὐτοὶ ἀκροῶνται ὑμῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὧν ἂν ἰσχύι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ ἐκείνων εὐνοίᾳ περιγένησθε.

Πάντων δὲ δεινότατον εἰ βέβαιον ἡμῖν μηδὲν καθεστήξει ὧν ἂν δόξῃ πέρι, μηδὲ γνωσόμεθα ὅτι χείροσι νόμοις ἀκινήτοις χρωμένη πόλις κρείσσων ἐστὶν ἢ καλῶς ἔχουσιν ἀκύροις, ἀμαθία τε μετὰ

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[37] *Cleon:* I have often reflected that a democratic state is incapable of ruling over others, and I am even more convinced of that now in light of your [i.e., the Athenian Assembly's] second thoughts on Mytilene. You are confident and forthright in your everyday interactions with each other and so that is how you behave toward our allies, too. But when you make missteps because you either believe what they say or are moved to pity for them, you fail to realize how dangerous this kind of leniency is for you or that this kind of weakness earns you no gratitude from the allies, either. You do not see that your empire is a tyranny that you wield over people who are plotting against you and do not wish to be ruled. They obey you not because you are willing to suffer for their sakes but because you have power over

σωφροσύνης ὠφελιμώτερον ἢ δεξιότης μετὰ ἀκολασίας, οἵ τε φαυλότεροι τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς ξυνετωτέρους ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλέον ἄμεινον οἰκοῦσι τὰς πόλεις. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν τε νόμων σοφώτεροι βούλονται φαίνεσθαι τῶν τε αἰεὶ λεγομένων ἐς τὸ κοινὸν περιγίγνεσθαι, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις μείζοσιν οὐκ ἂν δηλώσαντες τὴν γνώμην, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου τὰ πολλὰ σφάλλουσι τὰς πόλεις· οἱ δ᾽ ἀπιστοῦντες τῇ ἐξ ἑαυτῶν ξυνέσει ἀμαθέστεροι μὲν τῶν νόμων ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναι, ἀδυνατώτεροι δὲ τὸν τοῦ καλῶς εἰπόντος μέμψασθαι λόγον, κριταὶ δὲ ὄντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου μάλλον ἢ ἀγωνισταὶ ὀρθοῦνται τὰ πλείω. ὡς οὖν χρὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς ποιοῦντας μὴ δεινότητι καὶ ξυνέσεως ἀγῶνι ἐπαιρομένους παρὰ δόξαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ πλήθει παραινεῖν.

them—by virtue of your strength, and not because they like you.

The worst thing that could happen would be for nothing that we resolve to have any meaning, and for us to fail to recognize that a city is stronger when it has inferior but unbendable laws than when it has good laws with no real authority. Ignorance coupled with self-restraint is more advantageous than intelligence that knows no checks, and simpler people are usually better than smarter ones at running cities. That is because intelligent people like to appear wiser than the laws and come out on top in public debates, in the belief that there will be no better occasion for demonstrating just how clever they are. The result is that they are often their cities' undoing. On the other hand, people with less confidence in their own intelligence think that the laws know best and that they are unqualified to criticize the words of a good

[38] Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι τῇ γνώμῃ καὶ θαυμάζω μὲν τῶν προθέντων αὖθις περὶ Μυτιληναίων λέγειν καὶ χρόνου διατριβὴν ἐμποιησάντων, ὅ ἐστι πρὸς τῶν ἠδικηκότων μᾶλλον (ὁ γὰρ παθὼν τῷ δράσαντι ἀμβλυτέρᾳ τῇ ὀργῇ ἐπεξέρχεται, ἀμύνεσθαι δὲ τῷ παθεῖν ὅτι ἐγγυτάτω κείμενον ἀντίπαλον ὂν μάλιστα τὴν τιμωρίαν λαμβάνει), θαυμάζω δὲ καὶ ὅστις ἔσται ὁ ἀντερῶν καὶ ἀξιώσων ἀποφαίνειν τὰς μὲν Μυτιληναίων ἀδικίας ἡμῖν ὠφελίμους οὔσας, τὰς δ' ἡμετέρας ξυμφορὰς τοῖς ξυμμάχοις βλάβας καθισταμένας. καὶ δῆλον ὅτι ἢ τῷ λέγειν πιστεύσας τὸ πάνυ δοκοῦν ἀνταποφῆναι ὡς οὐκ ἔγνωσται ἀγωνίσαιτ'

speaker. They see themselves as judges on equal terms, not as competitors, and so work together successfully. That is why we must not let our own intelligence distract us and behave like contestants in a match of wits by offering dubious advice to you, the members of the public.

[38] I personally remain of the same opinion I always held and am surprised by those who are now attempting to stall things by putting the issue of Mytilene back on the table. This kind of delay works only to the advantage of the guilty party: the victim is now being asked to take action against the wrongdoer with an anger blunted by time. Reprisals are far more likely to lead to appropriate punishment when they are taken immediately after the injury. I am also surprised that anyone would speak to the contrary and argue that the Mytileneans' offenses actually work in our favor, or that any misfortunes that

ἄν, ἢ κέρδει ἐπαιρόμενος τὸ εὐπρεπὲς τοῦ λόγου ἐκπονήσας παράγειν πειράσεται.

Ἡ δὲ πόλις ἐκ τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀγώνων τὰ μὲν ἆθλα ἑτέροις δίδωσιν, αὐτὴ δὲ τοὺς κινδύνους ἀναφέρει. αἴτιοι δ᾽ ὑμεῖς κακῶς ἀγωνοθετοῦντες, οἵτινες εἰώθατε θεαταὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων γίγνεσθαι, ἀκροαταὶ δὲ τῶν ἔργων, τὰ μὲν μέλλοντα ἔργα ἀπὸ τῶν εὖ εἰπόντων σκοποῦντες ὡς δυνατὰ γίγνεσθαι, τὰ δὲ πεπραγμένα ἤδη, οὐ τὸ δρασθὲν πιστότερον ὄψει λαβόντες ἢ τὸ ἀκουσθέν, ἀπὸ τῶν λόγῳ καλῶς ἐπιτιμησάντων· καὶ μετὰ καινότητος μὲν λόγου ἀπατᾶσθαι ἄριστοι, μετὰ δεδοκιμασμένου δὲ μὴ ξυνέπεσθαι ἐθέλειν, δοῦλοι ὄντες τῶν αἰεὶ ἀτόπων, ὑπερόπται δὲ τῶν εἰωθότων, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν αὐτὸς εἰπεῖν ἕκαστος βουλόμενος δύνασθαι, εἰ δὲ μή, ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι τοῖς τοιαῦτα λέγουσι μὴ ὕστεροι ἀκολουθῆσαι δοκεῖν τῇ γνώμῃ, ὀξέως δέ τι λέγοντος προεπαινέσαι, καὶ προαισθέσθαι τε πρόθυμοι τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ προνοῆσαι βραδεῖς τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν

we suffer harm our allies, too. Obviously, someone must be quite confident in his own speaking abilities if he is going to contend that things which were most certainly decided never actually were—or else he must be so corrupted by bribes that he has worked to come up with a reasonable-sounding speech to mislead you.

In these kinds of contests, the city awards the prizes to others but assumes all of the risks. You have no one to blame but yourselves for instituting such misguided competitions, for you have a habit of treating speeches as spectacles and of listening passively to tales of action. You form your ideas about what is going to happen entirely on the basis of what skilled speakers say, and when you reflect on what has already transpired you are just as likely to put faith in what you hear from renowned orators as you are to believe your own eyes. You are incredibly good at being deceived by any new argument but

ἀποβησόμενα, ζητοῦντές τε ἄλλο τι ὡς εἰπεῖν ἢ ἐν οἷς ζῶμεν, φρονοῦντες δὲ οὐδὲ περὶ τῶν παρόντων ἱκανῶς· ἁπλῶς τε ἀκοῆς ἡδονῇ ἡσσώμενοι καὶ σοφιστῶν θεαταῖς ἐοικότες καθημένοις μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ πόλεως βουλευομένοις.

[39] Ὧν ἐγὼ πειρώμενος ἀποτρέπειν ὑμᾶς ἀποφαίνω Μυτιληναίους μάλιστα δὴ μίαν πόλιν ἠδικηκότας ὑμᾶς. ἐγὼ γάρ, οἵτινες μὲν μὴ

want nothing to do with one that is tried and true. You are slaves to the latest fashion and scorn anything you already understand. What you all desire most is the ability to give a good speech or, failing that, to compete with speakers by making out that you grasp their points immediately; to praise an incisive remark practically before it is made; to be eager to catch on quickly to arguments but slow to foresee their implications. What you really want is, as it were, a totally different world than the one we actually live in, and yet you are not even capable of making sense of the present situation. You have entirely succumbed to the pleasures of listening and seem more like disciples gathered at the feet of gurus than citizens deliberating the affairs of their city.

[39] In an attempt to dissuade you, I am going to demonstrate that Mytilene has wronged you more than any other city. I, for one, am able to

δυνατοὶ φέρειν τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀρχὴν ἢ οἵτινες ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἀναγκασθέντες ἀπέστησαν, ξυγγνώμην ἔχω· νῆσον δὲ οἵτινες ἔχοντες μετὰ τειχῶν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν μόνον φοβούμενοι τοὺς ἡμετέρους πολεμίους, ἐν ᾧ καὶ αὐτοὶ τριήρων παρασκευῇ οὐκ ἄφαρκτοι ἦσαν πρὸς αὐτούς, αὐτόνομοί τε οἰκοῦντες καὶ τιμώμενοι ἐς τὰ πρῶτα ὑπὸ ἡμῶν τοιαῦτα εἰργάσαντο, τί ἄλλο οὗτοι ἢ ἐπεβούλευσάν τε καὶ ἐπανέστησαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀπέστησαν (ἀπόστασις μέν γε τῶν βίαιόν τι πασχόντων ἐστίν), ἐζήτησάν τε μετὰ τῶν πολεμιωτάτων ἡμᾶς στάντες διαφθεῖραι; καίτοι δεινότερόν ἐστιν ἢ εἰ καθ' αὑτοὺς δύναμιν κτώμενοι ἀντεπολέμησαν. παράδειγμα δὲ αὐτοῖς οὔτε αἱ τῶν πέλας ξυμφοραὶ ἐγένοντο, ὅσοι ἀποστάντες ἤδη ἡμῶν ἐχειρώθησαν, οὔτε ἡ παροῦσα εὐδαιμονία παρέσχεν ὄκνον μὴ ἐλθεῖν ἐς τὰ δεινά· γενόμενοι δὲ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον θρασεῖς καὶ ἐλπίσαντες μακρότερα μὲν τῆς δυνάμεως, ἐλάσσω δὲ τῆς βουλήσεως, πόλεμον ἤραντο,

excuse those who revolt because they cannot tolerate your rule or have been forced to do so by our enemies. But when we are talking about people who live on an island fortified with walls; who have nothing to fear but our enemies invading them by sea (which they were protected against, since they were outfitted with triremes); people who enjoyed full autonomy and protection because we held them in the highest regard—on what grounds would they plot an insurrection? (They did not "secede," for secession implies that they were victims.) Why would they seek to ally with our bitterest enemies in an attempt to destroy us? What they have done is worse than if they had made war against us merely as a power grab. They learned nothing from the example set when we crushed their neighbors who tried to revolt, nor did their present prosperity inspire any hesitation about treading on dangerous ground. They grew

ἰσχὺν ἀξιώσαντες τοῦ δικαίου προθεῖναι· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ ᾠήθησαν περιέσεσθαι, ἐπέθεντο ἡμῖν οὐκ ἀδικούμενοι. εἴωθε δὲ τῶν πόλεων αἷς ἂν μάλιστα ἀπροσδόκητος καὶ δι᾽ ἐλαχίστου εὐπραξία ἔλθῃ, ἐς ὕβριν τρέπειν· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ κατὰ λόγον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὐτυχοῦντα ἀσφαλέστερα ἢ παρὰ δόξαν, καὶ κακοπραγίαν ὡς εἰπεῖν ῥᾷον ἀπωθοῦνται ἢ εὐδαιμονίαν διασῴζονται.

Χρῆν δὲ Μυτιληναίους καὶ πάλαι μηδὲν διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν τετιμῆσθαι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐς τόδε ἐξύβρισαν· πέφυκε γὰρ καὶ ἄλλως ἄνθρωπος τὸ μὲν θεραπεῦον ὑπερφρονεῖν, τὸ δὲ μὴ ὑπεῖκον θαυμάζειν. Κολασθέντων δὲ καὶ νῦν ἀξίως τῆς ἀδικίας καὶ μὴ τοῖς μὲν ὀλίγοις ἡ αἰτία προστεθῇ, τὸν δὲ δῆμον ἀπολύσητε. πάντες γὰρ ὑμῖν γε ὁμοίως ἐπέθεντο, οἷς γ᾽ ἐξῆν ὡς ἡμᾶς τραπομένοις νῦν πάλιν ἐν τῇ πόλει εἶναι· ἀλλὰ τὸν μετὰ τῶν ὀλίγων κίνδυνον ἡγησάμενοι βεβαιότερον ξυναπέστησαν.

overconfident in their future and, with aspirations that overreached their capabilities (but were still within their ambitions), declared war. In doing so they decided to rank force ahead of justice. They attacked us at a moment when they thought they could win and not when they had been wronged. Cities tend to become insolent when they are suddenly visited by unexpected good fortune. It is usually safer for people to thrive within measure and not beyond all reason. Hardship is easier to fend off, so to speak, than prosperity is to maintain.

Back then we should have held the Mytileneans in no higher esteem than anyone else and they never would have grown so impertinent. Besides, it is human nature to scorn attempts at conciliation and admire steadfastness. So, let them now face a punishment that fits the crime. And do not lay the blame merely on the oligarchs and let the people go unpunished. They

Τῶν τε ξυμμάχων σκέψασθε εἰ τοῖς τε ἀναγκασθεῖσιν ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ τοῖς ἑκοῦσιν ἀποστᾶσι τὰς αὐτὰς ζημίας προσθήσετε, τίνα οἴεσθε ὄντινα οὐ βραχείᾳ προφάσει ἀποστήσεσθαι, ὅταν ἢ κατορθώσαντι ἐλευθέρωσις ᾖ ἢ σφαλέντι μηδὲν παθεῖν ἀνήκεστον; ἡμῖν δὲ πρὸς ἑκάστην πόλιν ἀποκεκινδυνεύσεται τά τε χρήματα καὶ αἱ ψυχαί· καὶ τυχόντες μὲν πόλιν ἐφθαρμένην παραλαβόντες τῆς ἔπειτα προσόδου, δι᾽ ἣν ἰσχύομεν, τὸ λοιπὸν στερήσεσθε, σφαλέντες δὲ πολεμίους πρὸς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἕξομεν, καὶ ὃν χρόνον τοῖς νῦν καθεστηκόσι δεῖ ἐχθροῖς ἀνθίστασθαι, τοῖς οἰκείοις ξυμμάχοις πολεμήσομεν.

were all involved in the attack, and if they had only come to us they would now be back home in their city. Instead, they thought it a safer bet to take their chances and join the oligarchs in revolt.

Just think: if you lay down the same punishment for allies forced to rebel by our enemies as you do on those who revolt of their own free will, who then will hesitate to revolt on the slightest excuse, when freedom is the prize for success and the mistake will not be fatal if they try but fail? We will have to put our lives and resources on the line for every single territory. And these places will be ruined once we subdue them, which means that we will be deprived of the rest of the revenue we so depend on. When we lose, we will gain even more adversaries than we already have and end up making war with our allies where time would be better spent fighting our enemies.

[40] Οὔκουν δεῖ προθιεῖναι ἐλπίδα οὔτε λόγῳ πιστὴν οὔτε χρήμασιν ὠνητήν, ὡς ξυγγνώμην ἁμαρτεῖν ἀνθρωπίνως λήψονται. ἄκοντες μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔβλαψαν, εἰδότες δὲ ἐπεβούλευσαν· ξύγγνωμον δ᾽ ἐστὶ τὸ ἀκούσιον. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ τότε πρῶτον καὶ νῦν διαμάχομαι μὴ μεταγνῶναι ὑμᾶς τὰ προδεδογμένα, μηδὲ τρισὶ τοῖς ἀξυμφορωτάτοις τῇ ἀρχῇ, οἴκτῳ καὶ ἡδονῇ λόγων καὶ ἐπιεικείᾳ, ἁμαρτάνειν.

Ἔλεός τε γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοίους δίκαιος ἀντιδίδοσθαι καὶ μὴ πρὸς τοὺς οὔτ᾽ ἀντοικτιοῦντας ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε καθεστῶτας αἰεὶ πολεμίους· οἵ τε τέρποντες λόγῳ ῥήτορες ἕξουσι καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἐλάσσοσιν ἀγῶνα, καὶ μὴ ἐν ᾧ ἡ μὲν πόλις βραχέα ἡσθεῖσα μεγάλα ζημιώσεται, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ εὖ εἰπεῖν τὸ παθεῖν εὖ ἀντιλήψονται· καὶ ἡ ἐπιείκεια πρὸς τοὺς μέλλοντας ἐπιτηδείους καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἔσεσθαι μᾶλλον δίδοται ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοίως τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἧσσον πολεμίους ὑπολειπομένους.

[40] You must not, then, give them any hope that we can be persuaded or bought off, or let them think that they will be pardoned because this was all just a matter of human error. They did not inflict their harm inadvertently; they knowingly conspired with that aim in mind. Pardons are for when the error was unintentional. I still insist, just as I was the first to do back then, that you cannot go back on what has already been decided. You must also avoid being misled by the three things most destructive to empire: pity, enjoyable speeches, and a concern for leniency.

It is right to show mercy to others who are like yourselves but not to people who will never return the favor and who, inevitably, will always be your enemies. Enthralling speakers will have their chance to match wits in another contest when less is at stake and the city is not poised, following a brief instant of entertainment, to

Ἓν τε ξυνελὼν λέγω· πιθόμενοι μὲν ἐμοὶ τά τε δίκαια ἐς Μυτιληναίους καὶ τὰ ξύμφορα ἅμα ποιήσετε, ἄλλως δὲ γνόντες τοῖς μὲν οὐ χαριεῖσθε, ὑμᾶς δὲ αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον δικαιώσεσθε. εἰ γὰρ οὗτοι ὀρθῶς ἀπέστησαν, ὑμεῖς ἂν οὐ χρεὼν ἄρχοιτε. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ οὐ προσῆκον ὅμως ἀξιοῦτε τοῦτο δρᾶν, παρὰ τὸ εἰκός τοι καὶ τούσδε ξυμφόρως δεῖ κολάζεσθαι, ἢ παύεσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι.

Τῇ τε αὐτῇ ζημίᾳ ἀξιώσατε ἀμύνασθαι καὶ μὴ ἀναλγητότεροι οἱ διαφυγόντες τῶν ἐπιβουλευσάντων φανῆναι, ἐνθυμηθέντες ἃ εἰκὸς ἦν αὐτοὺς ποιῆσαι κρατήσαντας ὑμῶν, ἄλλως τε καὶ προϋπάρξαντας ἀδικίας. μάλιστα δὲ οἱ μὴ ξὺν προφάσει τινὰκακῶς ποιοῦντες ἐπεξέρχονται καὶ διολλύναι, τὸν κίνδυνον ὑφορώμενοι τοῦ ὑπολειπομένου ἐχθροῦ· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ξὺν ἀνάγκῃ τι παθὼν χαλεπώτερος διαφυγὼν τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἐχθροῦ.

suffer immense losses—though those who speak well will always be rewarded with an easy life. And leniency should only be shown to people who will be helpful in the future, not granted to people who will remain ever as they are and never become any less hostile to us than they are now.

In short, what I am saying is this: if you listen to me, you will be dealing with the Mytileneans both as they deserve and in a way that is to our own advantage. But if you decide otherwise, you will not be doing them a favor so much as inflicting punishment on yourselves. For if they were right to revolt, then you are wrong to rule. But if you do want to rule regardless, fair or unfair your best interest demands that you punish them. Otherwise give up the empire and go parade your self-righteousness where there is no real danger involved.

Μὴ οὖν προδόται γένησθε ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, γενόμενοι δ᾽ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ πάσχειν καὶ ὡς πρὸ παντὸς ἂν ἐτιμήσασθε αὐτοὺς χειρώσασθαι, νῦν ἀνταπόδοτε μὴ μαλακισθέντες πρὸς τὸ παρὸν αὐτίκα μηδὲ τοῦ ἐπικρεμασθέντος ποτὲ δεινοῦ ἀμνημονοῦντες. κολάσατε δὲ ἀξίως τούτους τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυμμάχοις παράδειγμα σαφὲς καταστήσατε, ὃς ἂν ἀφίστηται, θανάτῳ ζημιωσόμενον. τόδε γὰρ ἦν γνῶσιν, ἧσσον τῶν πολεμίων ἀμελήσαντες τοῖς ὑμετέροις αὐτῶν μαχεῖσθε ξυμμάχοις.

Punish them, then, with the same penalty that they tried to impose on you, and do not give any indication that you are any less resentful than they are now that you have escaped their plots. Keep in mind what they would have done to you had they been successful, especially given that they were the ones who committed the first offense. People who wrong others for no good reason tend to keep at it until they finish the job, in the worry that their enemies will become a danger to them down the road. An innocent person who has been made to suffer is much more difficult to deal with, if he escapes, than an enemy merely taking tit for tat.

Do not betray yourselves. Revert as much as you can to the mindset you had when you were actually suffering and you thought that suppressing the revolt was your greatest priority. Now is the time for payback; do not go soft in the face of their contrition and forget what

[41] *Τοιαῦτα μὲν ὁ Κλέων εἶπεν. μετὰ δ' αὐτὸν Διόδοτος ὁ Εὐκράτους, ὅσπερ καὶ ἐν τῇ προτέρᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀντέλεγε μάλιστα μὴ ἀποκτεῖναι Μυτιληναίους, παρελθὼν καὶ τότε ἔλεγε τοιάδε.*

[42] Οὔτε τοὺς προθέντας τὴν διαγνώμην αὖθις περὶ Μυτιληναίων αἰτιῶμαι οὔτε τοὺς μεμφομένους μὴ πολλάκις περὶ τῶν μεγίστων βουλεύεσθαι ἐπαινῶ, νομίζω δὲ δύο τὰ ἐναντιώτατα εὐβουλίᾳ εἶναι, τάχος τε καὶ ὀργήν, ὧν τὸ μὲν μετὰ ἀνοίας φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι, τὸ δὲ μετὰ ἀπαιδευσίας καὶ βραχύτητος γνώμης.

terror loomed over you then. Punish these people as they deserve and set a clear example for the rest of the allies so they know that anyone who revolts will face the penalty of death. If this were made clear, you could stop neglecting your enemies in the interest of fighting your allies.

[41] *That, more or less, is what Cleon said. Afterward, Diodotus, the son of Eucrates, who in the previous assembly had spoken with the greatest conviction against massacring the Mytileneans, came forward and said the following:*

[42] I do not blame those who have brought the matter of the resolution about Mytilene back to your attention, nor do I praise those who disparage the idea of deliberating major issues several times. I think the two biggest obstacles to good decision-making are haste and anger. The first tends to go hand in hand with

Τούς τε λόγους ὅστις διαμάχεται μὴ διδασκάλους τῶν πραγμάτων γίγνεσθαι, ἢ ἀξύνετός ἐστιν ἢ ἰδίᾳ τι αὐτῷ διαφέρει· ἀξύνετος μέν, εἰ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἡγεῖται περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ μὴ ἐμφανοῦς φράσαι, διαφέρει δ᾽ αὐτῷ, εἰ βουλόμενός τι αἰσχρὸν πεῖσαι εὖ μὲν εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἂν ἡγεῖται περὶ τοῦ μὴ καλοῦ δύνασθαι, εὖ δὲ διαβαλὼν ἐκπλῆξαι ἂν τούς τε ἀντεροῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀκουσομένους.

Χαλεπώτατοι δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ χρήμασι προκατηγοροῦντες ἐπίδειξίν τινα. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἀμαθίαν κατῃτιῶντο, ὁ μὴ πείσας ἀξυνετώτερος ἂν δόξας εἶναι ἢ ἀδικώτερος ἀπεχώρει· ἀδικίας δ᾽ ἐπιφερομένης πείσας τε ὕποπτος γίγνεται καὶ μὴ τυχὼν μετὰ ἀξυνεσίας καὶ ἄδικος.

Ἥ τε πόλις οὐκ ὠφελεῖται ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε· φόβῳ γὰρ ἀποστερεῖται τῶν ξυμβούλων. καὶ πλεῖστ᾽ ἂν ὀρθοῖτο ἀδυνάτους λέγειν ἔχουσα τοὺς τοιούτους τῶν πολιτῶν· ἐλάχιστα γὰρ ἂν πεισθείησαν ἁμαρτάνειν. χρὴ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν

foolishness, the second with recklessness and snap judgments.

Anyone who maintains that we have nothing useful to learn from listening to speeches either lacks sense or has a secret agenda at stake. He lacks sense if he thinks there is any other way of discussing the future's uncertainties; he has something at stake if his aim is to persuade people to do something dishonorable but he thinks he cannot actually give a good speech in the interest of a bad cause—so by making compelling false accusations he presumes that he can take both his opponents and audience by surprise.

The trickiest cases, though, are when people accuse someone of presenting something a certain way because he has taken a bribe. If they merely charged him with ignorance, at least then he would gain a reputation for stupidity rather than dishonesty should he fail to persuade.

πολίτην μὴ ἐκφοβοῦντα τοὺς ἀντεροῦντας, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου φαίνεσθαι ἄμεινον λέγοντα, τὴν δὲ σώφρονα πόλιν τῷ τε πλεῖστα εὖ βουλεύοντι μὴ προστιθέναι τιμήν, ἀλλὰ μηδ᾽ ἐλασσοῦν τῆς ὑπαρχούσης, καὶ τὸν μὴ τυχόντα γνώμης οὐχ ὅπως ζημιοῦν, ἀλλὰ μηδ᾽ ἀτιμάζειν. οὕτω γὰρ ὅ τε κατορθῶν ἥκιστα ἂν ἐπὶ τῷ ἔτι μειζόνων ἀξιοῦσθαι παρὰ γνώμην τι καὶ πρὸς χάριν λέγοι, ὅ τε μὴ ἐπιτυχὼν ὀρέγοιτο τῷ αὐτῷ, χαριζόμενός τι καὶ αὐτός, προσάγεσθαι τὸ πλῆθος.

But when someone is accused of corruption he attracts suspicion even if he wins his case. And if he fails to win, people think that he is stupid in addition to being corrupt.

The city gains nothing in such instances when, because of fear, it deprives itself of advisors. In fact, a city would be best off if these kinds of citizens were terrible speakers because then it would be less likely to be induced to making mistakes. A good citizen should not try to intimidate his opponents but to prove himself the better speaker fair and square, and a sensible city should neither heap honors on the best adviser nor act to lessen the esteem he already enjoys. By the same token, someone whose opinion does not prevail should not suffer disgrace, let alone punishment. If that were the case, good speakers would be disinclined to go against their personal beliefs and say whatever is popular in hopes of becoming famous.

[43] Ὧν ἡμεῖς τἀναντία δρῶμεν, καὶ προσέτι, ἤν τις καὶ ὑποπτεύηται κέρδους μὲν ἕνεκα, τὰ βέλτιστα δὲ ὅμως λέγειν, φθονήσαντες τῆς οὐ βεβαίου δοκήσεως τῶν κερδῶν τὴν φανερὰν ὠφελίαν τῆς πόλεως ἀφαιρούμεθα. καθέστηκε δὲ τἀγαθὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐθέος λεγόμενα μηδὲν ἀνυποπτότερα εἶναι τῶν κακῶν, ὥστε δεῖν ὁμοίως τόν τε τὰ δεινότατα βουλόμενον πεῖσαι ἀπάτῃ προσάγεσθαι τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὸν τὰ ἀμείνω λέγοντα ψευσάμενον πιστὸν γενέσθαι. μόνην τε πόλιν διὰ τὰς περινοίας εὖ ποιῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ προφανοῦς μὴ ἐξαπατήσαντα ἀδύνατον· ὁ γὰρ διδοὺς φανερῶς τι ἀγαθὸν ἀνθυποπτεύεται ἀφανῶς πῃ πλέον ἕξειν.

Χρὴ δὲ πρὸς τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε ἀξιοῦν τι ἡμᾶς περαιτέρω προνοοῦντας λέγειν

Likewise, less successful speakers would not try to win people over simply by telling them what they wanted to hear.

[43] Here, though, we do just the opposite and, what is more, when someone is suspected of acting for profit, no matter how valuable his advice we get so jealous at the mere intimation of private gain that we are willing to deprive the city of the obvious benefit of his counsel. We are by habit just as suspicious of good advice as we are of bad, the result being that speakers who seek to urge horrific courses of action use deceit to win people over. On the other hand, people who actually have good counsel to offer need to lie just to be believed. This is the only place where quick-wittedness makes it impossible to enjoy success openly and without any need for deceit because anyone who does something good publicly is suspected of ulterior motives.

ὑμῶν τῶν δι᾽ ὀλίγου σκοπούντων, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὑπεύθυνον τὴν παραίνεσιν ἔχοντας πρὸς ἀνεύθυνον τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀκρόασιν. εἰ γὰρ ὅ τε πείσας καὶ ὁ ἐπισπόμενος ὁμοίως ἐβλάπτοντο, σωφρονέστερον ἂν ἐκρίνετε· νῦν δὲ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἦντιν᾽ ἂν τύχητε ἔστιν ὅτε σφαλέντες τὴν τοῦ πείσαντος μίαν γνώμην ζημιοῦτε καὶ οὐ τὰς ὑμετέρας αὐτῶν, αἳ πολλαὶ οὖσαι ξυνεξήμαρτον.

[44] Ἐγὼ δὲ παρῆλθον οὔτε ἀντερῶν περὶ Μυτιληναίων οὔτε κατηγορήσων. οὐ γὰρ περὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ἀδικίας ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγών, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐβουλίας. ἦν τε γὰρ ἀποφήνω πάνυ ἀδικοῦντας αὐτούς, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο

On matters of the greatest importance and in a case such as this, we need to speak with a little more foresight than you people, who tend to make hasty decisions, especially as we have to answer for the advice we give while you, as listeners, are not held responsible. If both the people who did the persuading and the people they convinced all suffered the same consequences then you would be wiser judges. But, as things stand, when you make an error because you acted on some impulse, you punish whoever convinced you instead of punishing yourselves—even though you all made the error right along with him.

[44] But I have come here neither to advocate on behalf of the Mytileneans nor to condemn them. The debate, if we are wise, is not about the offense that they committed but about our own best course. Even if I could prove that they

καὶ ἀποκτεῖναι κελεύσω, εἰ μὴ ξυμφέρον, ἤν τε καὶ ἔχοντάς τι ξυγγνώμης, ἐᾶν, εἰ τῇ πόλει μὴ ἀγαθὸν φαίνοιτο. νομίζω δὲ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον βουλεύεσθαι ἢ τοῦ παρόντος.

Καὶ τοῦτο ὃ μάλιστα Κλέων ἰσχυρίζεται, ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν ξυμφέρον ἔσεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἧσσον ἀφίστασθαι θάνατον ζημίαν προθεῖσι, καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ τοῦ ἐς τὸ μέλλον καλῶς ἔχοντος ἀντισχυριζόμενος τἀναντία γιγνώσκω. καὶ οὐκ ἀξιῶ ὑμᾶς τῷ εὐπρεπεῖ τοῦ ἐκείνου λόγου τὸ χρήσιμον τοῦ ἐμοῦ ἀπώσασθαι. δικαιότερος γὰρ ὢν αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος πρὸς τὴν νῦν ὑμετέραν ὀργὴν ἐς Μυτιληναίους τάχ᾽ ἂν ἐπισπάσαιτο· ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ δικαζόμεθα πρὸς αὐτούς, ὥστε τῶν δικαίων δεῖν, ἀλλὰ βουλευόμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅπως χρησίμως ἕξουσιν.

were wholly in the wrong I would not urge you to put them to death unless it were in our interest. Likewise, I would not encourage some sort of pardon for them if it were not good for the city. I think we need to be deliberating here about the future and not the present.

And this is what Cleon so forcefully maintains: that, going forward, it will be in our own best interest to deter revolts by passing down this sentence of death. I, on the other hand, am absolutely certain that if we are really concerned about our future then the opposite holds true. I do not, moreover, think that you should discard my argument's practicality because of the specious allure of his. After all, his position might seem a more just response to your current anger against Mytilene. But we are not taking them to trial and weighing matters of absolute justice; we are deliberating about them and how they can be of use.

[45] Ἐν οὖν ταῖς πόλεσι πολλῶν θανάτου ζημίαι πρόκεινται καὶ οὐκ ἴσων τῷδε, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλασσόνων ἁμαρτημάτων· ὅμως δὲ τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐπαιρόμενοι κινδυνεύουσι, καὶ οὐδείς πω καταγνοὺς ἑαυτοῦ μὴ περιέσεσθαι τῷ ἐπιβουλεύματι ἦλθεν ἐς τὸ δεινόν. πόλις τε ἀφισταμένη τίς πω ἥσσω τῇ δοκήσει ἔχουσα τὴν παρασκευήν, ἢ οἰκείαν ἢ ἄλλων ξυμμαχίᾳ, τούτῳ ἐπεχείρησε; πεφύκασί τε ἅπαντες καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἁμαρτάνειν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι νόμος ὅστις ἀπείρξει τούτου, ἐπεὶ διεξεληλύθασί γε διὰ πασῶν τῶν ζημιῶν οἱ ἄνθρωποι προστιθέντες, εἴ πως ἧσσον ἀδικοῖντο ὑπὸ τῶν κακούργων. καὶ εἰκὸς τὸ πάλαι τῶν μεγίστων ἀδικημάτων μαλακωτέρας κεῖσθαι αὐτάς, παραβαινομένων δὲ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐς τὸν θάνατον αἱ πολλαὶ ἀνήκουσιν· καὶ ταῦτα ὅμως παραβαίνεται. ἢ τοίνυν δεινότερόν τι τούτου δέος εὑρετέον ἐστὶν ἢ τόδε γε οὐδὲν ἐπίσχει, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ μὲν πενία ἀνάγκῃ τὴν τόλμαν παρέχουσα, ἡ δ᾽ ἐξουσία ὕβρει τὴν πλεονεξίαν

[45] Cities impose the death penalty for various reasons and not only in cases like this; they do so for more minor offenses, too. Nevertheless, hope still drives people to take risks, and people never throw themselves in danger's way when their prior calculations have already foretold defeat. Likewise, has any rebelling city ever attempted this kind of revolt in the belief that it had failed to make sufficient preparations, whether alone or with help from allies? People naturally make mistakes as both individuals and states and no law will ever prevent this. The proof is that humans have experimented with every possible punishment in the hopes of guarding themselves from potential wrongdoers. Long ago, there were most likely more lenient sentences for the most serious offenses but, over time, as people continued to commit those offenses, the death penalty became more common. Yet people still do wrong

καὶ φρονήματι, αἱ δ᾽ ἄλλαι ξυντυχίαι ὀργῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς ἑκάστη τις κατεχεται ὑπ᾽ ἀνηκέστου τινὸς κρείσσονος, ἐξάγουσιν ἐς τοὺς κινδύνους.

Ἥ τε ἐλπὶς καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐπὶ παντί, ὁ μὲν ἡγούμενος, ἡ δ᾽ ἐφεπομένη, καὶ ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ἐκφροντίζων, ἡ δὲ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τύχης ὑποτιθεῖσα πλεῖστα βλάπτουσι, καὶ ὄντα ἀφανῆ κρείσσω ἐστὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων δεινῶν. καὶ ἡ τύχη ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς οὐδὲν ἔλασσον ξυμβάλλεται ἐς τὸ ἐπαίρειν· ἀδοκήτως γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε παρισταμένη καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑποδεεστέρων κινδυνεύειν τινὰ προάγει καὶ οὐχ ἧσσον τὰς πόλεις, ὅσῳ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων τε, ἐλευθερίας ἢ ἄλλων ἀρχῆς, καὶ μετὰ πάντων ἕκαστος ἀλογίστως ἐπὶ πλέον τι αὑτὸν ἐδόξασεν. ἁπλῶς τε ἀδύνατον καὶ πολλῆς εὐηθείας, ὅστις οἴεται, τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως ὁρμωμένης προθύμως τι πρᾶξαι, ἀποτροπήν τινα ἔχειν ἢ νόμων ἰσχύι ἢ ἄλλῳ τῳ δεινῷ.

despite it, so either we need to scare them with an even more terrifying punishment or just accept that it is no deterrent. Poverty begets boldness out of sheer necessity; power, with all of its arrogance and pride, leads to greed. In other circumstances different passions hold people in their mighty, incurable thrall and spur them to take risks.

In every case, though, hope and desire—the one leading, the other following; the one undertaking the planning, the other whispering that success will come easy—are the most harmful forces of all. They might be invisible, but they are mightier than any terrors that can be seen. In addition to these, luck plays just as important a role in motivating people. It can turn up when least expected and drive people to take risks even if they lack the necessary resources. This is no less true of states, when the most serious matters—of independence or empire—are

[46] Οὔκουν χρὴ οὔτε τοῦ θανάτου τῇ ζημίᾳ ὡς ἐχεγγύῳ πιστεύσαντας χεῖρον βουλεύσασθαι, οὔτε ἀνέλπιστον καταστῆσαι τοῖς ἀποστᾶσιν ὡς οὐκ ἔσται μεταγνῶναι καὶ ὅτι ἐν βραχυτάτῳ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καταλῦσαι. σκέψασθε γὰρ ὅτι νῦν μέν, ἤν τις καὶ ἀποστᾶσα πόλις γνῷ μὴ περιεσομένη, ἔλθοι ἂν ἐς ξύμβασιν δυνατὴ οὖσα ἔτι τὴν δαπάνην ἀποδοῦναι καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ὑποτελεῖν· ἐκείνως δὲ τίνα οἴεσθε ἥντινα οὐκ ἄμεινον μὲν ἢ νῦν παρασκευάσεσθαι, πολιορκίᾳ δὲ παρατενεῖσθαι ἐς τοὔσχατον, εἰ τὸ αὐτὸ δύναται σχολῇ καὶ ταχὺ ξυμβῆναι; ἡμῖν τε πῶς οὐ βλάβη δαπανᾶν καθημένοις διὰ τὸ

at stake. Everyone joins everyone else in irrationally overrating themselves. Simply put, it is impossible and hugely naïve to think that human nature can be stopped, whether by force of law or any other deterrent, once it has really and truly set its heart on something.

[46] All of this means that we should not make a poor decision based on our trust that the death penalty is a deterrent; nor should we eliminate all hope in the rebels by signaling that there is no point in them repenting and putting an end to their misstep as quickly as possible. Just think that now, when a rebelling city realizes that it cannot succeed, it still has a chance to come to an agreement with us by assenting to repay our expenditure and pay tribute after that. But if things are otherwise, is it not the case that they will only make better preparations and hold out under siege until the very

ἀξύμβατον, καὶ ἢν ἕλωμεν, πόλιν ἐφθαρμένην παραλαβεῖν καὶ τῆς προσόδου τὸ λοιπὸν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς στέρεσθαι; ἰσχύομεν δὲ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους τῷδε.

Ὥστε οὐ δικαστὰς ὄντας δεῖ ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον τῶν ἐξαμαρτανόντων ἀκριβεῖς βλάπτεσθαι ἢ ὁρᾶν ὅπως ἐς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον μετρίως κολάζοντες ταῖς πόλεσιν ἕξομεν ἐς χρημάτων λόγον ἰσχυούσαις χρῆσθαι, καὶ τὴν φυλακὴν μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν νόμων τῆς δεινότητος ἀξιοῦνποιεῖσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἐπιμελείας. οὗ νῦν τοὐναντίον δρῶντες, ἤν τινα ἐλεύθερον καὶ βίᾳ ἀρχόμενον εἰκότως πρὸς αὐτονομίαν ἀποστάντα χειρωσώμεθα, χαλεπῶς οἰόμεθα χρῆναι τιμωρεῖσθαι. χρὴ δὲ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους οὐκ ἀφισταμένους σφόδρα κολάζειν, ἀλλὰ πρὶν ἀποστῆναι σφόδρα φυλάσσειν καὶ προκαταλαμβάνειν ὅπως μηδ᾽ ἐς ἐπίνοιαν τούτου ἴωσι, κρατήσαντάς τε ὅτι ἐπ᾽ ἐλάχιστον τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιφέρειν.

last, if sooner or later the outcome will be the same? Does it not ultimately hurt us to forsake all this money by refusing to come to an agreement—or, if we win, to conquer a devastated territory, and lose all future income from it? That kind of revenue is precisely what gives us our strength against our enemies.

We must not, then, think of ourselves as strict judges here and in doing so injure ourselves more than we injure those actually at fault. Instead, we have to see how, by punishing them with moderation, we can exploit these cities as sources of income going forward. We must also resolve to seek protection not in the severity of our laws but in the diligence with which we act. Now we do the opposite, for when we subdue a free state that is ruled against its will and which has revolted—understandably—to reclaim its own autonomy, we think the punishment must be severe. We must not excessively

[47] Ὑμεῖς δὲ σκέψασθε ὅσον ἂν καὶ τοῦτο ἁμαρτάνοιτε Κλέωνι πειθόμενοι. νῦν μὲν γὰρ ὑμῖν ὁ δῆμος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσιν εὔνους ἐστὶ καὶ ἢ οὐ ξυναφίσταται τοῖς ὀλίγοις ἤ, ἐὰν βιασθῇ, ὑπάρχει τοῖς ἀποστήσασι πολέμιος εὐθύς, καὶ τῆς ἀντικαθισταμένης πόλεως τὸ πλῆθος ξύμμαχον ἔχοντες ἐς πόλεμον ἐπέρχεσθε. εἰ δὲ διαφθερεῖτε τὸν δῆμον τὸν Μυτιληναίων, ὃς οὔτε μετέσχε τῆς ἀποστάσεως, ἐπειδή τε ὅπλων ἐκράτησεν, ἑκὼν παρέδωκε τὴν πόλιν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀδικήσετε τοὺς εὐεργέτας κτείνοντες, ἔπειτα καταστήσετε τοῖς δυνατοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὃ βούλονται μάλιστα· ἀφιστάντες γὰρ τὰς πόλεις

punish independent states for rebelling but rather be excessively vigilant before they do and maneuver to keep the thought far from their minds. When we do quell a rebellion, we should assign the blame for it to as small a contingent as possible.

[47] Consider, too, another aspect of the mistake you would be making by listening to Cleon. Right now, throughout the allied cities, the people are well-disposed toward you. They either refuse to rebel with the oligarchs or, if they are forced to join in, they immediately become enemies of the rebels. That means that when a city revolts you have the majority of the people with you as allies in the fight. But if you obliterate the people of Mytilene, who never actually took part in the revolt and who, once they got ahold of arms, willingly handed the city over to you, you will not merely be acting

τὸν δῆμον εὐθὺς ξύμμαχον ἕξουσι προδειξάντων ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ζημίαν τοῖς τε ἀδικοῦσιν ὁμοίως κεῖσθαι καὶ τοῖς μή. δεῖ δέ, καὶ εἰ ἠδίκησαν, μὴ προσποιεῖσθαι, ὅπως ὃ μόνον ἡμῖν ἔτι ξύμμαχόν ἐστι μὴ πολέμιον γένηται.

Καὶ τοῦτο πολλῷ ξυμφορώτερον ἡγοῦμαι ἐς τὴν κάθεξιν τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἑκόντας ἡμᾶς ἀδικηθῆναι ἢ δικαίως οὓς μὴ δεῖ διαφθεῖραι καὶ τὸ Κλέωνος τὸ αὐτὸ δίκαιον καὶ ξύμφορον τῆς τιμωρίας οὐχ εὑρίσκεται ἐν αὐτῷ δυνατὸν ὂν ἅμα γίγνεσθαι.

unjustly by killing your own benefactors: you will also be crafting exactly the circumstances that those in power desire most. From now on, the people will join in at once when the powerful few lead their cities in revolt, for this case will have already established that the same punishment awaits the guilty and innocent alike. But even if the people had been guilty in this case, you would need to proceed as if they were not, in order to avoid turning our one remaining ally into an enemy.

I think that it will be much more expedient for keeping our empire if we pursue this strategy, namely of agreeing to suffer an injustice, as opposed to annihilating—however justly—those whom we should not. You will find that, despite what Cleon claims, in this case it is impossible for justice and expediency to go hand in hand in punishment.

[48] Ὑμεῖς δὲ γνόντες ἀμείνω τάδε εἶναι καὶ μήτε οἴκτῳ πλέον νείμαντες μήτ᾽ ἐπιεικείᾳ, οἷς οὐδὲ ἐγὼ ἐῶ προσάγεσθαι, ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν παραινουμένων πείθεσθέ μοι Μυτιληναίων οὓς μὲν Πάχης ἀπέπεμψεν ὡς ἀδικοῦντας κρῖναι καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν, τοὺς δ᾽ ἄλλους ἐᾶν οἰκεῖν. τάδε γὰρ ἔς τε τὸ μέλλον ἀγαθὰ καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἤδη φοβερά· ὅστις γὰρ εὖ βουλεύεται πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους κρείσσων ἐστὶν ἢ μετ᾽ ἔργων ἰσχύος ἀνοίᾳ ἐπιών.

[49] *Τοιαῦτα δὲ ὁ Διόδοτος εἶπεν. ῥηθεισῶν δὲ τῶν γνωμῶν τούτων μάλιστα ἀντιπάλων πρὸς ἀλλήλας οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἦλθον μὲν ἐς ἀγῶνα ὅμως τῆς δόξης καὶ ἐγένοντο ἐν τῇ χειροτονίᾳ ἀγχώμαλοι, ἐκράτησε δὲ ἡ τοῦ Διοδότου. καὶ τριήρη εὐθὺς ἄλλην ἀπέστελλον κατὰ σπουδήν, ὅπως μὴ*

[48] Realize, then, that this is the better course, and do not act on the basis of pity or clemency, for I do not want you to be guided by those concerns either. Instead, be persuaded by my actual arguments to pass judgment on the Mytileneans sent here by Paches because they are guilty and leave the rest of them to dwell in peace. This will serve us well in the future and the decision will even inspire more fear in our adversaries, for those who take wise counsel about their enemies are mightier than they who make displays of force by launching reckless attacks.

[49] *That, more or less, is what Diodotus said. With the opinions that had been put forward in nearly dead heat, the Athenians put the matter to a vote, and though the show of hands was extremely close, Diodotus' proposal won. They immediately dispatched another trireme with*

φθασάσης τῆς προτέρας εὕρωσι διεφθαρμένην τὴν πόλιν· προεῖχε δὲ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ νυκτὶ μάλιστα. παρασκευασάντων δὲ τῶν Μυτιληναίων πρέσβεων τῇ νηὶ οἶνον καὶ ἄλφιτα καὶ μεγάλα ὑποσχομένων, εἰ φθάσειαν, ἐγένετο σπουδὴ τοῦ πλοῦ τοιαύτη ὥστε ἤσθιόν τε ἅμα ἐλαύνοντες οἴνῳ καὶ ἐλαίῳ ἄλφιτα πεφυρμένα, καὶ οἱ μὲν ὕπνον ἥροῦντο κατὰ μέρος, οἱ δὲ ἤλαυνον.

Κατὰ τύχην δὲ πνεύματος οὐδενὸς ἐναντιωθέντος καὶ τῆς μὲν προτέρας νεὼς οὐ σπουδῇ πλεούσης ἐπὶ πρᾶγμα ἀλλόκοτον, ταύτης δὲ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ ἐπειγομένης, ἡ μὲν ἔφθασε τοσοῦτον ὅσον Πάχητα ἀνεγνωκέναι τὸ ψήφισμα καὶ μέλλειν δράσειν τὰ δεδογμένα, ἡ δ' ὑστέρα αὐτῆς ἐπικατάγεται καὶ διεκώλυσε μὴ διαφθεῖραι. παρὰ τοσοῦτον μὲν ἡ Μυτιλήνη ἦλθε κινδύνου.

all haste for fear that the other would arrive first and they would find the city destroyed because it had a day and night's lead. The ambassadors from Mytilene stocked the ship with wine and barley meal and promised them fantastic rewards if they made it in time. The ship's urgency was so great that the crew ate their meals of wine and barley kneaded with olive oil even as they rowed and, while one shift took its turn sleeping, the others kept right on rowing.

As luck would have it, there was no opposing wind and the earlier ship had been sailing in no particular rush to carry out such a dire errand. This second ship made haste in the manner described and the first arrived just far enough ahead for Paches to read out the decree and be poised to carry out its resolutions. At that very moment, the second made landfall and prevented the whole city from being obliterated: that is how close to destruction Mytilene had come.

On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue (416 BCE)

In 425, Athens had refused the Spartans' attempts to make peace in the wake of their humiliating surrenders in the battles of Pylos and Sphacteria (4.38–40). When Cleon and the Spartan general Brasidas, "the men on each side most opposed to peace," were both killed at Amphipolis in 422, the Spartan king Pleistoanax and Athenian general Nicias intensified their efforts to forge a treaty (5.16). The 421 "Peace of Nicias" marked a de facto Athenian victory in the Archidamian War and dictated a fifty-year truce "on land and on sea" between Athens, Sparta, and their respective allies (5.18). Aristophanes' comedy *Peace* premiered at the festival of the City Dionysia just days before the treaty was formally ratified; in it, the main Athenian character

anticipates a joyous celebration of a return to peace after a wearing decade of war.

Conflicts between Spartan and Athenian allies nevertheless continued to flare up in the Peloponnese. In 418, Athens and a new coalition of allies from the Peloponnesian peninsula—Argos, Elis, and Mantinea—were roundly defeated by Sparta at the Battle of Mantinea (5.65–75). As Nicias would later note before the Athenian Assembly on the eve of the Sicilian Expedition, his "Peace" had quickly become one "only in name" (6.10; see "On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate").

The Battle of Mantinea is the last major event that Thucydides narrates before he turns his attention to the Athenian siege of the island of Melos, a small Aegean island north of the Sea of Crete and southeast of the Peloponnese. In the winter of 416, the Athenians launched an expedition—with 38 ships, 2,700 hoplites, and

hundreds of archers—against the island, which had originally been established as a Spartan colony. Thucydides tells us that "they, like the other islanders, had not wanted to be subjugated to Athens." When Athens and Sparta went to war the Melians had attempted to remain neutral, but after the Athenians invaded and devastated their lands the Melians naturally took sides against them (5.84).

The Athenians sent representatives to negotiate with the Melians and Thucydides presents the "Melian Dialogue" as a transcript of that final meeting. It differs from the other selections in this volume in two important ways. First, it unfolds as a (sometimes rapid-fire) dialogue rather than as a speech or set of speeches; even in the manuscripts it is the only passage of Thucydides' *History* to be laid out like a dramatic script. Second, the conference between the Athenians and Melians was held in private,

on Melos; Thucydides' source would have had to have been the reports of the Athenian emissaries who participated in the negotiations. The dialogue is, however, often suspected of being largely Thucydides' invention.

By Thucydides' account, the meeting on Melos ended with the Melians refusing to surrender and the Athenians issuing a final warning that the Melians' decision would prove "a grave mistake." Both sides followed through on their promises—the Athenians to keep up their siege, and the Melians to resist it. When at last Melos had no choice but to surrender, the Athenians fulfilled their own prophecy of the Melians' doom: "They seized and killed all the adult males and sold the women and children to slavery" (5.116).

Athens had apparently presented Melos with a true dilemma: surrender or be obliterated. Right from the start of the dialogue, the Athe-

nian emissaries establish that matters of abstract justice will not be taken into consideration. Yet here, as with the previous chapter's Mytilenean Debate, the concepts of "justice" and "advantage/expediency" are repeatedly foregrounded. Today, the dialogue is often cited as the first "Realist-Idealist" debate; we also find in it the clearest articulation of the so-called "Athenian thesis" that both gods and mortals "always seek to rule wherever they can" (see introduction, "The Athenian Thesis").

Yet the debate's appearance in the *History* so soon before the narrative of the catastrophic failure of the Sicilian Expedition serves to foreground the Athenians' drift into both cruelty and folly. After all, a decade or so earlier they had decided to spare most of the population of Mytilene—if only on second thoughts and at the eleventh hour.

[85] *Οἱ δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων πρέσβεις ἔλεγον τοιάδε.* οὐ πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος οἱ λόγοι γίγνονται, ὅπως δὴ μὴ ξυνεχεῖ ῥήσει οἱ πολλοὶ ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ ἀνέλεγκτα ἐς ἅπαξ ἀκούσαντες ἡμῶν ἀπατηθῶσι (γιγνώσκομεν γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτο φρονεῖ ἡμῶν ἡ ἐς τοὺς ὀλίγους ἀγωγή), ὑμεῖς οἱ καθήμενοι ἔτι ἀσφαλέστερον ποιήσατε. καθ᾽ ἕκαστον γὰρ καὶ μηδ᾽ ὑμεῖς ἑνὶ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ μὴ δοκοῦν ἐπιτηδείως λέγεσθαι εὐθὺς ὑπολαμβάνοντες κρίνετε. καὶ πρῶτον εἰ ἀρέσκει ὡς λέγομεν εἴπατε.

[86] *Οἱ δὲ τῶν Μηλίων ξύνεδροι ἀπεκρίναντο·* Ἡ μὲν ἐπιείκεια τοῦ διδάσκειν καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν

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[85] *The Athenian ambassadors said this:* We see that this debate is not to take place in public, evidently in an attempt to keep us from duping the masses with a drawn-out speech full of dazzling arguments and claims that go unchallenged (we are fully aware that this is why we have been brought in to speak to so few of you). Given the circumstances, those of you actually present might as well shore up your position even further. Do not wait until we have finished and respond with one long speech that addresses each of our individual points. Instead, interrupt us right away whenever you find something we say objectionable. But first, tell us if you are amenable to that idea.

[86] *The members of the Melian Council answered:* We find no fault with your perfectly

ἀλλήλους οὐ ψέγεται, τὰ δὲ τοῦ πολέμου, παρόντα ἤδη καὶ οὐ μέλλοντα, διαφέροντα αὐτοῦ φαίνεται. ὁρῶμεν γὰρ αὐτούς τε κριτὰς ἥκοντας ὑμᾶς τῶν λεχθησομένων, καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς περιγενομένοις μὲν τῷ δικαίῳ καὶ δι᾽ αὐτὸ μὴ ἐνδοῦσι πόλεμον ἡμῖν φέρουσαν, πεισθεῖσι δὲ δουλείαν.

[87] ΑΘ. Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν ὑπονοίας τῶν μελλόντων λογιούμενοι ἢ ἄλλο τι ξυνήκετε ἢ ἐκ τῶν παρόντων καὶ ὧν ὁρᾶτε περὶ σωτηρίας βουλεύσοντες τῇ πόλει, παυοίμεθ᾽ ἄν· εἰ δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῦτο,λέγοιμεν ἄν.

[88] ΜΗΛ. Εἰκὸς μὲν καὶ ξυγγνώμη ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε καθεστῶτας ἐπὶ πολλὰ καὶ λέγοντας καὶ

reasonable proposal that each of us should lay out our positions in a civilized fashion. Yet your aggression—not merely threatened, but already underway—seems to stand at odds with the suggestion. We realize that you have come to judge what we say and that only two outcomes are likely: one that leads to war, if we win this debate on the justice of our cause and refuse to surrender, and another that condemns us to slavery, if we are persuaded by what you say.

[87] *Athenians:* Well, if you intend to waste our time making conjectures about what the future holds or anything else but the matter at hand and the steps that you might take to save your city, then we will stop right here. But if you can stay focused, we can talk.

[88] *Melians:* When people have been driven into these kinds of circumstances it is perfectly

δοκοῦντας τρέπεσθαι· ἡ μέντοι ξύνοδος καὶ περὶ σωτηρίας ἥδε πάρεστι, καὶ ὁ λόγος ᾧ προκαλεῖσθε τρόπῳ, εἰ δοκεῖ, γιγνέσθω.

[89] ΑΘ. Ἡμεῖς τοίνυν οὔτε αὐτοὶ μετ' ὀνομάτων καλῶν, ὡς ἢ δικαίως τὸν Μῆδον καταλύσαντες ἄρχομεν ἢ ἀδικούμενοι νῦν ἐπεξερχόμεθα, λόγων μῆκος ἄπιστον παρέξομεν, οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ἀξιοῦμεν ἢ ὅτι Λακεδαιμονίων ἄποικοι ὄντες οὐ ξυνεστρατεύσατε ἢ ὡς ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ἠδικήκατε λέγοντας οἴεσθαι πείσειν, τὰ δυνατὰ δ' ἐξ ὧν ἑκάτεροι ἀληθῶς φρονοῦμεν διαπράσσεσθαι, ἐπισταμένους πρὸς εἰδότας ὅτι δίκαια μὲν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπείῳ λόγῳ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἀνάγκης κρίνεται, δυνατὰ δὲ οἱ προύχοντες πράσσουσι καὶ οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ξυγχωροῦσιν.

natural and forgivable for them to say and think all kinds of things. Nevertheless, this is a meeting about saving our city, so if you agree then let the discussion proceed as you suggest.

[89] *Athenians:* Well then, we do not intend to go on at suspicious length, waxing poetic about how we earned our empire by defeating the Persians or are here only because you have wronged us. Nor do we anticipate that you will say anything to convince us that, despite being a Spartan colony, you never joined their campaigns against us or otherwise ever mistreated us. We need to accomplish what we can on the basis of what we both really think, each side fully aware that justice is only a factor in human decisions when the parties are on equal footing. Those in positions of power do what their power permits, while the weak have no choice but to accept it.

[90] ΜΗΛ. Ἥι μὲν δὴ νομίζομέν γε, χρήσιμον (ἀνάγκη γάρ, ἐπειδὴ ὑμεῖς οὕτω παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον τὸ ξυμφέρον λέγειν ὑπέθεσθε) μὴ καταλύειν ὑμᾶς τὸ κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τῷ αἰεὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ γιγνομένῳ εἶναι τὰ εἰκότα καὶ δίκαια καί τι καὶ ἐντὸς τοῦ ἀκριβοῦς πείσαντά τινα ὠφεληθῆναι. καὶ πρὸς ὑμῶν οὐχ ἧσσον τοῦτο, ὅσῳ καὶ ἐπὶ μεγίστῃ τιμωρίᾳ σφαλέντες ἂν τοῖς ἄλλοις παράδειγμα γένοισθε.

[91] ΑΘ. Ἡμεῖς δὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχῆς, ἢν αἰ παυσθῇ, οὐκ ἀθυμοῦμεν τὴν τελευτήν· οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἄλλων, ὥσπερ καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, οὗτοι δεινοὶ τοῖς νικηθεῖσιν (ἔστι δὲ οὐ πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγών), ἀλλ᾽ ἢν οἱ ὑπήκοοί που τῶν ἀρξάντων αὐτοὶ ἐπιθέμενοι κρατήσωσιν.

[90] *Melians:* We think it will be to your advantage (we must frame it like that, for you have established that this is a debate about expediency and not justice) to refrain from violating a rule of common decency, namely that people in vulnerable positions should be treated with civility and justice and be allowed to benefit from arguments that are slightly beside the point. Upholding this principle is in your own interest too, for if you were ever to be defeated you would suffer enormous reprisals and be made an example for others.

[91] *Athenians:* We do not fear the end of our empire, if ever it will end, because people who rule over others—as the Spartans do—are not harsh toward their conquered peoples (though this quarrel is not with Sparta). What should be more feared is the prospect of subject states

καὶ περὶ μὲν τούτου ἡμῖν ἀφείσθω κινδυνεύεσθαι· ὡς δὲ ἐπ᾽ ὠφελίᾳ τε πάρεσμεν τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ νῦν τοὺς λόγους ἐροῦμεν τῆς ὑμετέρας πόλεως, ταῦτα δηλώσομεν, βουλόμενοι ἀπόνως μὲν ὑμῶν ἄρξαι, χρησίμως δ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἀμφοτέροις σωθῆναι.

[92] ΜΗΛ. Καὶ πῶς χρήσιμον ἂν ξυμβαίη ἡμῖν δουλεῦσαι, ὥσπερ καὶ ὑμῖν ἄρξαι;

[93] ΑΘ. Ὅτι ὑμῖν μὲν πρὸ τοῦ τὰ δεινότατα παθεῖν ὑπακοῦσαι ἂν γένοιτο, ἡμεῖς δὲ μὴ διαφθείραντες ὑμᾶς κερδαίνοιμεν ἄν.

[94] ΜΗΛ. Ὥστε δὲ ἡσυχίαν ἄγοντας ἡμᾶς φίλους μὲν εἶναι ἀντὶ πολεμίων, ξυμμάχους δὲ μηδετέρων, οὐκ ἂν δέξαισθε;

rising up against their rulers and seizing power. But leave that challenge to us. Right now, we intend to demonstrate that we are here for the good of our own empire, but also that everything we will say will be with an eye to saving your city. We want to annex you as painlessly as possible and believe that sparing you will be in both of our interests.

[92] *Melians:* Just how will it be as much in our interest to end up as your slaves as it will be in your interest to be our masters?

[93] *Athenians:* By submitting you will avoid a fate far worse and we, too, stand to profit from not obliterating you.

[94] *Melians:* Could you not just leave us in peace and treat us not as enemies but as friends, and regard us as a neutral party?

[95] ΑΘ. Οὐ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἡμᾶς βλάπτει ἡ ἔχθρα ὑμῶν ὅσον ἡ φιλία μὲν ἀσθενείας, τὸ δὲ μῖσος δυνάμεως παράδειγμα τοῖς ἀρχομένοις δηλούμενον.

[96] ΜΗΛ. Σκοποῦσι δ᾽ ὑμῶν οὕτως οἱ ὑπήκοοι τὸ εἰκός, ὥστε τούς τε μὴ προσήκοντας καὶ ὅσοι ἄποικοι ὄντες οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ ἀποστάντες τινὲς κεχείρωνται ἐς τὸ αὐτὸ τιθέασιν;

[97] ΑΘ. Δικαιώματι γὰρ οὐδετέρους ἐλλείπειν ἡγοῦνται, κατὰ δύναμιν δὲ τοὺς μὲν περιγίγνεσθαι, ἡμᾶς δὲ φόβῳ οὐκ ἐπιέναι· ὥστε ἔξω καὶ τοῦ πλεόνων ἄρξαι καὶ τὸ ἀσφαλὲς ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ καταστραφῆναι ἂν παράσχοιτε, ἄλλως τε καὶ νησιῶται ναυκρατόρων, καὶ ἀσθενέστεροι ἑτέρων ὄντες, εἰ μὴ περιγένοισθε.

[95] *Athenians:* No, because your hostility is not nearly as damaging to us as your friendship would be. Our subjects would take your friendship for our weakness—but your hatred would only confirm our strength.

[96] *Melians:* Surely your subjects can tell the difference between places to which you have no claim, your many colonies, and the states that you have subdued despite their resistance?

[97] *Athenians:* Well, all of them think they have justice on their side and that states such as yours remain independent because your power makes us too afraid to attack. Your destruction would thus not only grant us a larger empire, but greater security as well. What is more, as islanders—and relatively weak ones at that—you must not be allowed to prevail over us, the rulers of the sea.

[98] ΜΗΛ. Ἐν δ' ἐκείνῳ οὐ νομίζετε ἀσφάλειαν; δεῖ γὰρ αὖ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, ὥσπερ ὑμεῖς τῶν δικαίων λόγων ἡμᾶς ἐκβιβάσαντες τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ξυμφόρῳ ὑπακούειν πείθετε, καὶ ἡμᾶς τὸ ἡμῖν χρήσιμον διδάσκοντας, εἰ τυγχάνει καὶ ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ ξυμβαῖνον, πειρᾶσθαι πείθειν. ὅσοι γὰρ νῦν μηδετέροις ξυμμαχοῦσι, πῶς οὐ πολεμώσεσθε αὐτούς, ὅταν ἐς τάδε βλέψαντες ἡγήσωνταί ποτε ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ σφᾶς ἥξειν; κἀν τούτῳ τί ἄλλο ἢ τοὺς μὲν ὑπάρχοντας πολεμίους μεγαλύνετε, τοὺς δὲ μηδὲ μελλήσαντας[1] γενέσθαι ἄκοντας ἐπάγεσθε;

[99] ΑΘ. Οὐ (γὰρ νομίζομεν ἡμῖν τούτους δεινοτέρους, ὅσοι ἠπειρῶταί που ὄντες τῶν ἐλευθέρων πολλὴν τὴν διαμέλλησιν τῆς πρὸς

[98] *Melians:* But can you not see the safety in the approach we propose? Even though you have thrown considerations of justice to the wayside and press us to submit to what is advantageous for you, we must try yet again to persuade you by explaining how our own practical interests might coincide with your own. In pursuing your course, will you not find yourselves at war with all neutral states? When they see what has happened here, they will think that sooner or later you will behave toward them as you have toward us. And does it not then follow that you will only increase the enemies you already have and forcibly create ones of people who never had that intention?

[99] *Athenians:* We are not particularly intimidated by the states on the mainland. They are so confident in their freedom that they will

ἡμᾶς φυλακῆς ποιήσονται, ἀλλὰ τοὺς νησιώτας τέ που ἀνάρκτους, ὥσπερ ὑμᾶς, καὶ τοὺς ἤδη τῆς ἀρχῆς τῷ ἀναγκαίῳ παροξυνομένους. οὗτοι γὰρ πλεῖστ᾽ ἂν τῷ ἀλογίστῳ ἐπιτρέψαντες σφᾶς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐς προῦπτον κίνδυνον καταστήσειαν.

[100] ΜΗΛ. Ἦ που ἄρα, εἰ τοσαύτην γε ὑμεῖς τε μὴ παυσθῆναι ἀρχῆς καὶ οἱ δουλεύοντες ἤδη ἀπαλλαγῆναι τὴν παρακινδύνευσιν ποιοῦνται, ἡμῖν γε τοῖς ἔτι ἐλευθέροις πολλὴ κακότης καὶ δειλία μὴ πᾶν πρὸ τοῦ δουλεῦσαι ἐπεξελθεῖν.

[101] ΑΘ. Οὔκ, ἤν γε σωφρόνως βουλεύησθε· οὐ γὰρ περὶ ἀνδραγαθίας ὁ ἀγὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ὑμῖν, μὴ αἰσχύνην ὄφλειν, περὶ δὲ σωτηρίας

be slow to take measures to guard against us. We are more concerned about the islanders—including you—not yet under our sway, and the subject states already aggrieved at being forced to join our empire. They are the ones most likely to turn reckless and bring open danger upon themselves and on us as well.

[100] *Melians:* Well, if everyone is willing to go to such extreme risks—you to avoid losing your empire, and your enslaved subjects to be liberated from it—then it would be incredibly contemptible and cowardly for free people such as ourselves to accept enslavement over any other option.

[101] *Athenians:* Not if you are sensible. This is not a matter of proving courage versus incurring humiliation because this is not a conflict

μᾶλλον ἡ βουλή, πρὸς τοὺς κρείσσονας πολλῷ μὴ ἀνθίστασθαι.

[102] ΜΗΛ. Ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιστάμεθα τὰ τῶν πολέμων ἔστιν ὅτε κοινοτέρας τὰς τύχας λαμβάνοντα ἢ κατὰ τὸ διαφέρον ἑκατέρων πλῆθος. καὶ ἡμῖν τὸ μὲν εἶξαι εὐθὺς ἀνέλπιστον, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ δρωμένου ἔτι καὶ στῆναι ἐλπὶς ὀρθῶς.

[103] ΑΘ. Ἐλπὶς δέ, κινδύνῳ παραμύθιον οὖσα, τοὺς μὲν ἀπὸ περιουσίας χρωμένους αὐτῇ, κἂν βλάψῃ, οὐ καθεῖλε, τοῖς δὲ ἐς ἅπαν τὸ ὑπάρχον ἀναρριπτοῦσι (δάπανος γὰρ φύσει) ἅμα τε γιγνώσκεται σφαλέντων καὶ ἐν ὅτῳ ἔτι φυλάξεταί τις αὐτὴν γνωρισθεῖσαν οὐκ ἐλλείπει. ὃ ὑμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς τε καὶ ἐπὶ ῥοπῆς μιᾶς ὄντες μὴ βούλεσθε παθεῖν, μηδὲ ὁμοιωθῆναι τοῖς πολλοῖς, οἷς παρὸν ἀνθρωπείως ἔτι σῴζεσθαι, ἐπειδὰν πιεζομένους αὐτοὺς ἐπιλίπωσιν αἱ φανεραὶ

between equals. It is your survival that is on the line here, for there is no hope of resisting those who are so much stronger than you.

[102] *Melians:* Yes, but we know that sometimes in war fortune is more impartial than the disparities in forces would suggest. Surrendering would instantly render us hopeless, but by resisting we will preserve some hope of success.

[103] *Athenians:* In dangerous times hope is nothing more than a fairytale. When people with actual means indulge in it, hope can be harmful, though not fatal. But when they stake everything they have on it all at once (hope is, after all, an expensive business), they come to know it for what it really is—but only on the way down. You will find that it is present even when people could otherwise shield themselves from it, if they recognized its true nature. You

ἐλπίδες, ἐπὶ τὰς ἀφανεῖς καθίστανται, μαντικήν τε καὶ χρησμοὺς καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα μετ᾽ ἐλπίδων λυμαίνεται.

[104] ΜΗΛ. Χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ ἡμεῖς, εὖ ἴστε, νομίζομεν πρὸς δύναμίν τε τὴν ὑμετέραν καὶ τὴν τύχην, εἰ μὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ἔσται, ἀγωνίζεσθαι· ὅμως δὲ πιστεύομεν τῇ μὲν τύχῃ ἐκ τοῦ θείου μὴ ἐλασσώσεσθαι, ὅτι ὅσιοι πρὸς οὐ δικαίους ἱστάμεθα, τῆς δὲ δυνάμεως τῷ ἐλλείποντι τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων ἡμῖν ξυμμαχίαν προσέσεσθαι, ἀνάγκην ἔχουσαν, καὶ εἰ μή του ἄλλου, τῆς γε ξυγγενείας ἕνεκα καὶ αἰσχύνῃ βοηθεῖν. καὶ οὐ παντάπασιν οὕτω ἀλόγως θρασυνόμεθα.

are weak and your fate hangs in the balance, so you should not aspire to be like all those who, though salvation may still be humanly possible, seek refuge in imaginary reasons for hope—prophecies, oracles, and all those things that debase mankind by encouraging hope—whenever manifest ones have abandoned them in their troubles.

[104] *Melians:* Believe us; we understand that it will be difficult to contend with your power and the whims of fortune unless the odds are even. Nevertheless, we think that we will not come out on the wrong side of fortune because we are pious people standing up to iniquitous ones. And what we lack in power will be made up for by our alliance with the Spartans, who are duty-bound to help us if for no other reason than our common blood and for the sake of

[105] ΑΘ. Τῆς μὲν τοίνυν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐμενείας οὐδ᾽ ἡμεῖς οἰόμεθα λελείψεσθαι. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔξω τῆς ἀνθρωπείας τῶν μὲν ἐς τὸ θεῖον νομίσεως τῶν δ᾽ ἐς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς βουλήσεως δικαιοῦμεν ἢ πράσσομεν. ἡγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ, τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας, οὗ ἂν κρατῇ, ἄρχειν. καὶ ἡμεῖς οὔτε θέντες τὸν νόμον οὔτε κειμένῳ πρῶτοι χρησάμενοι, ὄντα δὲ παραλαβόντες καὶ ἐσόμενον ἐς αἰεὶ καταλείψοντες χρώμεθα αὐτῷ, εἰδότες καὶ ὑμᾶς ἂν καὶ ἄλλους ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ δυνάμει ἡμῖν γενομένους δρῶντας ἂν ταὐτό. καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὸ θεῖον οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ εἰκότος οὐ φοβούμεθα ἐλασσώσεσθαι· τῆς δὲ ἐς Λακεδαιμονίους δόξης, ἣν διὰ τὸ αἰσχρὸν δὴ βοηθήσειν ὑμῖν πιστεύετε αὐτούς, μακαρίσαντες ὑμῶν τὸ ἀπειρόκακον οὐ ζηλοῦμεν τὸ ἄφρον.

their own dignity. So, it is not entirely irrational for us to take heart as we do.

[105] *Athenians:* Well, in terms of divine favor, we think that we are in just as strong a position as you, for our thoughts and actions conflict neither with mortal views about the world of the gods nor with what humans typically want for themselves. After all, we believe that gods and know that people always seek to rule wherever they can. It is in their very nature. We did not establish that principle, nor are we the first to apply it; we merely inherited it and will pass it on to future generations. We also know well that if you or anyone else were in the same position of strength you would be acting in the same way toward us. There is, then, no good reason for us to fear defeat because of the gods. As to your ideas about Sparta, if you imagine that they will

Λακεδαιμόνιοι γὰρ πρὸς σφᾶς μὲν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰ ἐπιχώρια νόμιμα πλεῖστα ἀρετῇ χρῶνται· πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους πολλὰ ἄν τις ἔχων εἰπεῖν ὡς προσφέρονται, ξυνελὼν μάλιστα ἂν δηλώσειεν ὅτι ἐπιφανέστατα ὧν ἴσμεν τὰ μὲν ἡδέα καλὰ νομίζουσι, τὰ δὲ ξυμφέροντα δίκαια. καίτοι οὐ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας νῦν ἀλόγου σωτηρίας ἡ τοιαύτη διάνοια.

[106] ΜΗΛ. Ἡμεῖς δὲ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἥδη καὶ μάλιστα πιστεύομεν τῷ ξυμφέροντι αὐτῶν Μηλίους ἀποίκους ὄντας μὴ βουλήσεσθαι προδόντας τοῖς μὲν εὔνοις τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπίστους καταστῆναι, τοῖς δὲ πολεμίοις ὠφελίμους.

help you just to avoid embarrassment—well, we admire your naïveté but do not envy your foolishness.

The Spartans are excellent at handling their own affairs and observing their local customs. While, moreover, there is much to be said about their dealings with others, it might all be summed up as follows: they, of all peoples we know, would no doubt take the prize for equating what they enjoy doing with what is glorious and what is expedient with what is just. That mindset, however, will be of no help to your current, and indeed irrational, expectations of rescue.

[106] *Melians:* But we are already absolutely convinced that it is in their advantage not to want to betray us Melians, their own colonists. Doing so would convince those Greeks now well-disposed to them that they are not to

[107] ΑΘ. Οὔκουν οἴεσθε τὸ ξυμφέρον μὲν μετὰ ἀσφαλείας εἶναι, τὸ δὲ δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν μετὰ κινδύνου δρᾶσθαι· ὃ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἥκιστα ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τολμῶσιν.

[108] ΜΗΛ. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς κινδύνους τε ἡμῶν ἕνεκα μᾶλλον ἡγούμεθ' ἂν ἐγχειρίσασθαι αὐτοὺς καὶ βεβαιοτέρους ἢ ἐς ἄλλους νομιεῖν, ὅσῳ πρὸς μὲν τὰ ἔργα τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἐγγὺς κείμεθα, τῆς δὲ γνώμης τῷ ξυγγενεῖ πιστότεροι ἑτέρων ἐσμέν.

[109] ΑΘ. Τὸ δ' ἐχυρόν γε τοῖς ξυναγωνιουμένοις οὐ τὸ εὔνουν τῶν ἐπικαλεσαμένων φαίνεται, ἀλλ' ἢν τῶν ἔργων τις δυνάμει πολὺ προύχῃ· ὃ

be trusted and would serve their enemies' interests.

[107] *Athenians:* Surely you understand that expediency is always the safe course while the path of justice and integrity is fraught with danger—danger that Sparta would hardly be disposed to face.

[108] *Melians*: We believe that they would, in fact, be willing to face those dangers for our sakes, and would see them as relatively less perilous. We are located close to the Peloponnese should they ever need us, and the perspective we share by virtue of our blood relations makes us exceptionally trustworthy.

[109] *Athenians*: When people are considering joining a conflict it is not the goodwill of those who have called on them that is reassuring

Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ πλέον τι τῶν ἄλλων σκοποῦσι (τῆς γοῦν οἰκείας παρασκευῆς ἀπιστίᾳ καὶ μετὰ ξυμμάχων πολλῶν τοῖς πέλας ἐπέρχονται), ὥστε οὐκ εἰκὸς ἐς νῆσόν γε αὐτοὺς ἡμῶν ναυκρατόρων ὄντων περαιωθῆναι.

[110] ΜΗΛ. Οἱ δὲ καὶ ἄλλους ἂν ἔχοιεν πέμψαι· πολὺ δὲ τὸ Κρητικὸν πέλαγος, δι᾽ οὗ τῶν κρατούντων ἀπορώτερος ἡ λῆψις ἢ τῶν λαθεῖν βουλομένων ἡ σωτηρία. καὶ εἰ τοῦδε σφάλλοιντο, τράποιντ᾽ ἂν καὶ ἐς τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς τῶν ξυμμάχων, ὅσους μὴ Βρασίδας ἐπῆλθε, καὶ οὐ περὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς οἰκειοτέρας ξυμμαχίδος τε καὶ γῆς ὁ πόνος ὑμῖν ἔσται.

but the prospect of a superior force. The Spartans abide by that principle more than anyone else (and are so skeptical of their own means that they do not even attack their own neighbors unless with plenty of allies). They are also unlikely to cross the seas so long as we are the ones who command them.

[110] *Melians:* But they could send others in their place. And the Sea of Crete is wide, which means that it will be trickier for those who command it to catch them than it will be for them to escape being caught. And if that plan were to fail, they would just turn their attention to your lands at home and to the remaining states that you control but which were never invaded by Brasidas.[3] Then your trouble will be not so much with regions beyond your dominion as with your own homeland and imperial territories.

[111] ΑΘ. Τούτων μὲν καὶ πεπειραμένοις ἄν τι γένοιτο, καὶ ὑμῖν οὐκ ἀνεπιστήμοσιν ὅτι οὐδ' ἀπὸ μιᾶς πώποτε πολιορκίας Ἀθηναῖοι δι' ἄλλων φόβον ἀπεχώρησαν. ἐνθυμούμεθα δὲ ὅτι φήσαντες περὶ σωτηρίας βουλεύσειν οὐδὲν ἐν τοσούτῳ λόγῳ εἰρήκατε ᾧ ἄνθρωποι ἂν πιστεύσαντες νομίσειαν σωθήσεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὑμῶν τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρότατα ἐλπιζόμενα μέλλεται, τὰ δ' ὑπάρχοντα βραχέα πρὸς τὰ ἤδη ἀντιτεταγμένα περιγίγνεσθαι. πολλήν τε ἀλογίαν τῆς διανοίας παρέχετε, εἰ μὴ μεταστησάμενοι ἔτι ἡμᾶς ἄλλο τι τῶνδε σωφρονέστερον γνώσεσθε. οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐπί γε τὴν ἐν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς καὶ προύπτοις κινδύνοις πλεῖστα διαφθείρουσαν ἀνθρώπους αἰσχύνην τρέψεσθε. πολλοῖς γὰρ προορωμένοις ἔτι ἐς οἷα φέρονται τὸ αἰσχρὸν καλούμενον ὀνόματος ἐπαγωγοῦ δυνάμει ἐπεσπάσατο, ἡσσηθεῖσι τοῦ ῥήματος, ἔργῳ ξυμφοραῖς ἀνηκέστοις ἑκόντας περιπεσεῖν καὶ αἰσχύνην αἰσχίω μετὰ ἀνοίας ἢ τύχης προσλαβεῖν.

[111] *Athenians:* Some of what you say may well come true, for we have seen it all before, but surely you must also know that Athenians are never frightened by other things into giving up on a siege.[4] We would also like to point out that, even though we resolved to discuss saving your city, you have said nothing in this conversation that would give anyone cause to believe that it will actually be saved. Your greatest strengths are your hopes for the future, while the forces that you presently have are too meager to defeat those already marshalled against you. Your thinking seems wholly irrational, unless you intend to decide on some other, wiser course of action once you have asked us to leave. Surely you have no intention of clinging to honor—a choice that usually proves disastrous—in the midst of such humiliating and imminent danger. In many cases, even when people can still make out the dangers headed their way, it

Ὅ ὑμεῖς, ἢν εὖ βουλεύησθε, φυλάξεσθε καὶ οὐκ ἀπρεπὲς νομιεῖτε πόλεώς τε τῆς μεγίστης ἡσσᾶσθαι μέτρια προκαλουμένης, ξυμμάχους γενέσθαι ἔχοντας τὴν ὑμετέραν αὐτῶν ὑποτελεῖς, καὶ δοθείσης αἱρέσεως πολέμου πέρι καὶ ἀσφαλείας μὴ τὰ χείρω φιλονικῆσαι· ὡς οἵτινες τοῖς μὲν ἴσοις μὴ εἴκουσι, τοῖς δὲ κρείσσοσι καλῶς προσφέρονται, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἥσσους μέτριοί εἰσι, πλεῖστ᾽ ἂν ὀρθοῖντο. σκοπεῖτε οὖν καὶ μεταστάντων ἡμῶν καὶ ἐνθυμεῖσθε πολλάκις ὅτι περὶ πατρίδος βουλεύεσθε, ἧς μιᾶς πέρι καὶ ἐς μίαν βουλὴν τυχοῦσάν τε καὶ μὴ κατορθώσασαν ἔσται.

is so-called humiliation that spells their ruin simply because of the sheer force of the term. They are drawn into irremediable disaster by a mere word, and because of poor judgment effectively choose to suffer even more humiliation than fate otherwise had in store.

But you, if you are prudent, will shield yourselves from that sort of error and come around to seeing that it is hardly dishonorable to yield to the mightiest of cities on moderate terms and to become tribute-paying allies who are still permitted to keep their own land. When given a choice between war and peace, there is no point in insisting on fighting to achieve the less desirable outcome. People who refuse to bow to their equals, who behave well towards their superiors and reasonably toward their inferiors, are the ones who typically thrive. Reflect on all this once we have left and keep reminding yourselves that you are now determining the

[112] *Καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἀθηναῖοι μετεχώρησαν ἐκ τῶν λόγων· οἱ δὲ Μήλιοι κατὰ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς γενόμενοι, ὡς ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς παραπλήσια καὶ ἀντέλεγον, ἀπεκρίναντο τάδε.*

Οὔτε ἄλλα δοκεῖ ἡμῖν ἢ ἄπερ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, οὔτ' ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πόλεως ἑπτακόσια ἔτη ἤδη οἰκουμένης τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀφαιρησόμεθα, ἀλλὰ τῇ τε μέχρι τοῦδε σῳζούσῃ τύχῃ ἐκ τοῦ θείου αὐτὴν καὶ τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων τιμωρίᾳ πιστεύοντες πειρασόμεθα σῴζεσθαι. προκαλούμεθα δὲ ὑμᾶς φίλοι μὲν εἶναι, πολέμιοι δὲ μηδετέροις, καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἡμῶν ἀναχωρῆσαι σπονδὰς ποιησαμένους αἵτινες δοκοῦσιν ἐπιτήδειοι εἶναι ἀμφοτέροις.

fate of your fatherland—you have only one, and it will be either saved or doomed by this single decision.

[112] *With that, the Athenians made to leave the discussion. The Melians conferred amongst themselves and resolved to do more or less what they had said before. They then made this answer:*

We have decided, Athenians, to do nothing other than what we said before. Nor will we surrender in one short instant the freedom of a city that has stood for some seven hundred years. Instead, we will attempt to save it by putting our faith in the redeeming providence of the gods, which has preserved our city thus far, and in our hopes for human vengeance in the form of the Spartans. It is as friends, and enemies of neither side, that we ask that you leave

[113] *Οἱ μὲν δὴ Μήλιοι τοσαῦτα ἀπεκρίναντο· οἱ δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι διαλυόμενοι ἤδη ἐκ τῶν λόγων ἔφασαν* Ἀλλ᾽ οὖν μόνοι γε ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν βουλευμάτων, ὡς ἡμῖν δοκεῖτε, τὰ μὲν μέλλοντα τῶν ὁρωμένων σαφέστερα κρίνετε, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ τῷ βούλεσθαι ὡς γιγνόμενα ἤδη θεᾶσθε· καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις καὶ τύχῃ καὶ ἐλπίσι πλεῖστον δὴ παραβεβλημένοι καὶ πιστεύσαντες πλεῖστον καὶ σφαλήσεσθε.

this land as soon as you have made treaties on terms that are amenable to both parties.

[113] *That, more or less, is how the Melians responded. The Athenians, who were just on the point of leaving the conference, answered:* Judging by your decisions, you are the only people on earth who think the future is more certain than what is before you and regard imagined things as a *fait accompli* simply because you wish for them. You have placed yourselves entirely in the hands of Sparta, luck, and hope, and by trusting in these so completely you will be making a grave mistake.

On Launching a Foreign Invasion: The Sicilian Debate (415 BCE)

In 415, six years after the Peace of Nicias was sworn between Athens and Sparta, the Athenians embarked on a massive invasion of Sicily. Sicily, part of the "Greek West," had been a theater of war between Athens and Syracuse in the mid-420s, but even after the two cities made peace in 424 the Athenians continued to worry that Syracuse would join in alliance with Sparta.

By 415, Athens and its population had begun to recover from the war and plague of the previous decade. It was then that a pretext for a large-scale invasion of Sicily arrived in the form of an appeal for help from Segesta, a former Athenian ally. Segesta had recently lost a battle against Selinunte, another Sicilian city and ally of Syracuse, Athens' old enemy and imperial

rival on the island. Books 6 and 7 of Thucydides' *History* are devoted to a narrative of Athens' Sicilian Expedition: from the city's decision to undertake it (motivated, Thucydides explains, by the Athenians' desire to conquer the whole of the wealthy island), the departure of the troops, the course of the fighting, and the Athenians' eventual, spectacular defeat.

Early in Book 6, Thucydides presents an account of a debate held in the Athenian Assembly on the expedition's eve. He offers versions of three speeches made on the occasion: a first speech by Nicias advising against the invasion, a counterspeech by Alcibiades affirming his enthusiasm for it, and another speech by Nicias. Both Nicias and Alcibiades had already been voted commanders of the expedition (the third general was Lamachus, who would die in Sicily early on in the fighting). Nicias was a senior

general and statesman and had been largely responsible for brokering the peace that bore his name. Alcibiades had, a few years earlier, managed to build an alliance of Peloponnesian cities against Sparta—though the alliance was roundly defeated at the Battle of Mantinea in 418 (see also the introduction to "On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue"). He was a handsome and wealthy playboy in his mid-30s, a member of Athens' most renowned aristocratic family. When Alcibiades' father died early in his childhood, Pericles, a relative, became one of his guardians.

In his speech to the Assembly in 432, Pericles had warned his fellow Athenians not to "mix war with attempts to expand the empire or contrive additional dangers for yourselves" (1.144; see "On Justifying a War: Pericles' First War Speech"). Alcibiades was of a different character

from his guardian. Ambitious and bold, he inspired his fellow Athenians with a new eagerness to expand their empire's reach. Thus it was that, in the summer of 415, the Athenians launched their invasion of Sicily and bade farewell to a fleet of well over a hundred ships bearing some 5,000 men.

The period of preparations had, however, been ill-omened. On a night soon before the troops departed, several statues of the god Hermes ("herms") were mutilated. Alcibiades was suspected of involvement, but the Athenians decided not to bring him to trial before the fleet's departure. In his absence, further accusations quickly mounted against him, including a charge that he had been plotting to overthrow the democracy. In the autumn he was recalled to Athens, but he managed to escape the convoy dispatched to Sicily to retrieve

him. He immediately defected to Sparta, and Thucydides relates that he there delivered a speech informing the Spartans of the Athenians' plans in Sicily (6.89–92). Alcibiades also warned the Spartans that Athens would succeed in conquering the island if they failed to intervene. Thanks to his urging, the Spartans sent troops, commanded by Gylippus, to the west. They arrived just in time to rescue the flailing Syracusans and turn the war's tide against Athens.

The expedition ended in 413, but not before the Spartans had made another declaration of war against Athens at home. In Sicily, the Athenian forces were all but annihilated; those few who survived were imprisoned, then enslaved, and "few men out of so many ever saw their homecoming day" (7.87). Nicias had surrendered himself to Gylippus in the hopes that his

men would be spared; he was, however, executed (against Gylippus' wishes) and Thucydides calls him the "least deserving of the Greeks of my day to suffer such a terrible fate" (7.86). At home, the people of Athens were stunned when they learned of what had happened. According to Plutarch's *Life of Nicias* (§30), when a stranger unwittingly broke news—in a barbershop at the port—of what had befallen the expedition, the Athenians were so unwilling to believe the report that the barber who carried

the tidings was tortured until messengers arrived and confirmed the story.

The "total destruction" (7.87) of the Athenian forces at Sicily did not spell the end of the war. Toward the start of Book 8, Thucydides writes that, in the wake of the expedition, "all of Greece immediately rose up against Athens" (8.2). Soon, "both sides were preparing for war, exactly as they had done before, back at its beginning" (8.5).

[8.4] . . . *ὁ Νικίας ἀκούσιος μὲν ᾑρημένος ἄρχειν, νομίζων δὲ τὴν πόλιν οὐκ ὀρθῶς βεβουλεῦσθαι, ἀλλὰ προφάσει βραχείᾳ καὶ εὐπρεπεῖ τῆς Σικελίας ἁπάσης, μεγάλου ἔργου, ἐφίεσθαι, παρελθὼν ἀποτρέψαι ἐβούλετο καὶ παρῄνει τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις τοιάδε.*

[9] Ἡ μὲν ἐκκλησία περὶ παρασκευῆς τῆς ἡμετέρας ἥδε ξυνελέγη, καθ᾽ ὅ τι χρὴ ἐς Σικελίαν ἐκπλεῖν· ἐμοὶ μέντοι δοκεῖ καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ τούτου ἔτι χρῆναι σκέψασθαι, εἰ καὶ ἄμεινόν ἐστιν ἐκπέμπειν τὰς ναῦς, καὶ μὴ οὕτως βραχείᾳ βουλῇ περὶ μεγάλων πραγμάτων ἀνδράσιν ἀλλοφύλοις πειθομένους πόλεμον οὐ προσήκοντα αἱρεσθαι. καίτοι ἔγωγε καὶ τιμῶμαι ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου καὶ ἧσσον ἑτέρων περὶ τῷ ἐμαυτοῦ σώματι ὀρρωδῶ, νομίζων ὁμοίως ἀγαθὸν πολίτην εἶναι ὃς ἂν καὶ

ON LAUNCHING AN INVASION

History of the Peloponnesian War 6.8.4–24

[8.4] *Nicias had not wanted to be chosen to lead the expedition. He thought that the city was exercising poor judgment and that it was about to invade all of Sicily—a massive undertaking—on only a slight and specious pretext. He therefore came forward to speak in an attempt to dissuade them, and advised the Athenians as follows*:

[9] I understand that this assembly has been called to discuss the preparations that we need to make for sailing against Sicily. However, I also think that we must reconsider whether we ought to dispatch the ships at all—and not make such a rushed decision about something so important or allow foreigners to convince us to enter a war that has nothing to do with us. I do stand to win glory from all this and am less concerned than others about my personal safety, but by the same

τοῦ σώματός τι καὶ τῆς οὐσίας προνοῆται· μάλιστα γὰρ ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ τὰ τῆς πόλεως δι᾽ ἑαυτὸν βούλοιτο ὀρθοῦσθαι. ὅμως δὲ οὔτε ἐν τῷ πρότερον χρόνῳ διὰ τὸ προτιμᾶσθαι εἶπον παρὰ γνώμην οὔτε νῦν, ἀλλὰ ᾗ ἂν γιγνώσκω βέλτιστα ἐρῶ. καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς τρόπους τοὺς ὑμετέρους ἀσθενὴς ἄν μου ὁ λόγος εἴη, εἰ τά τε ὑπάρχοντα σῴζειν παραινοίην καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἑτοίμοις περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ μελλόντων κινδυνεύειν ὡς δὲ οὔτε ἐν καιρῷ σπεύδετε οὔτε ῥᾴδιά ἐστι κατασχεῖν ἐφ᾽ ἃ ὥρμησθε, ταῦτα διδάξω.

[10] Φημὶ γὰρ ὑμᾶς πολεμίους πολλοὺς ἐνθάδε ὑπολιπόντας καὶ ἑτέρους ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐκεῖσε πλεύσαντας δεῦρο ἐπαγαγέσθαι. καὶ οἴεσθε ἴσως τὰς γενομένας ὑμῖν σπονδὰς ἔχειν τι βέβαιον· αἳ ἡσυχαζόντων μὲν ὑμῶν ὀνόματι σπονδαὶ ἔσονται

token I consider it a mark of a good citizen to plan with his well-being and assets in mind. Such people would, if only out of self-interest, want to see their city prosper. Nevertheless, I have never said anything that I did not believe merely in an attempt to gain honor; nor will I do so now. I will only counsel you as I think best. I also know that no speech of mine could persuade you to change your ways if my advice were for you to preserve what you have and avoid risking it on fantasies of future gain. I am therefore going to explain to you why your haste here is imprudent and why it will not be easy to achieve all that you have set your hearts on.

[10] Let me first point out that you will be leaving many enemies behind you here and that sailing off will seem like an invitation for others to swoop in as well. Perhaps you think there is security in the treaty that we have sworn. As

(οὕτω γὰρ ἐνθένδε τε ἄνδρες ἔπραξαν αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων), σφαλέντων δέ που ἀξιόχρεῳ δυνάμει ταχεῖαν τὴν ἐπιχείρησιν ἡμῖν οἱ ἐχθροὶ ποιήσονται, οἷς πρῶτον μὲν διὰ ξυμφορῶν ἡ ξύμβασις καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἰσχίονος ἢ ἡμῖν κατ᾽ ἀνάγκην ἐγένετο, ἔπειτα ἐν αὐτῇ ταύτῃ πολλὰ τὰ ἀμφισβητούμενα ἔχομεν. εἰσὶ δ᾽ οἳ οὐδὲ ταύτην πω τὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐδέξαντο, καὶ οὐχ οἱ ἀσθενέστατοι· ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν ἄντικρυς πολεμοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ Λακεδαιμονίους ἔτι ἡσυχάζειν δεχημέροις σπονδαῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ κατέχονται. τάχα δ᾽ ἂν ἴσως, εἰ δίχα ἡμῶν τὴν δύναμιν λάβοιεν, ὅπερ νῦν σπεύδομεν, καὶ πάνυ ἂν ξυνεπίθοιντο μετὰ Σικελιωτῶν, οὓς πρὸ πολλῶν ἂν ἐτιμήσαντο ξυμμάχους γενέσθαι ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ.

Ὥστε χρὴ σκοπεῖν τινα αὐτὰ καὶ μὴ μετεώρῳ τῇ πόλει ἀξιοῦν κινδυνεύειν καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄλλης ὀρέγεσθαι πρὶν ἣν ἔχομεν βεβαιωσώμεθα, εἰ Χαλκιδῆς γε οἱ ἐπὶ Θράκης, ἔτη τοσαῦτα

long as you commit no act of aggression the treaty will stand, if only in name (for that is precisely what certain people, both here and among the enemy, have reduced it to). If, however, we make some misstep, our enemies will be swift to marshal a major force and to launch their attack. After all, the accord only came about in the first place because of catastrophes they suffered—it was their disgrace, not ours, that forced this agreement—and there are still many unresolved issues with the terms. In fact, certain states, and extremely powerful ones at that, have yet to sign. Some of them make open war against us while others are held at bay by series of ten-day treaties, and only because Sparta has been hesitant to make a move. It may very well be that if they see our forces divided—exactly the direction we are hurtling in—they will ally with the Sicilians, whom in earlier days

ἀφεστῶτες ἡμῶν, ἔτι ἀχείρωτοί εἰσι καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς κατὰ τὰς ἠπείρους ἐνδοιαστῶς ἀκροῶνται. ἡμεῖς δὲ Ἐγεσταίοις δὴ οὖσι ξυμμάχοις ὡς ἀδικουμένοις ὀξέως βοηθοῦμεν, ὑφ᾽ ὧν δ᾽ αὐτοὶ πάλαι ἀφεστώτων ἀδικούμεθα, ἔτι μέλλομεν ἀμύνεσθαι.

[11] Καίτοι τοὺς μὲν κατεργασάμενοι κἂν κατάσχοιμεν· τῶν δ᾽ εἰ καὶ κρατήσαιμεν, διὰ πολλοῦ γε καὶ πολλῶν ὄντων χαλεπῶς ἂν ἄρχειν δυναίμεθα. ἀνόητον δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοιούτους ἰέναι ὧν κρατήσας τε μὴ κατασχήσει τις καὶ μὴ

they would have valued as allies more than practically anyone else.

One therefore ought to take all this into account and not risk so much on invading so lofty a city or on striving for an even larger empire before we can be confident in what we already possess. Thracian Chalcis has been in a state of revolt for years now and remains intractable to this day, while the loyalty of other mainland cities is also questionable. We, meanwhile, are suddenly so eager to help the Segesteans on the grounds that they are allies who have been wronged, even as we refuse to confront those who have long been wronging us.

[11] We could be sure of retaining all of our territory if we made an effort to crush those insurgencies. By contrast, even if we managed to defeat the Sicilians it would be difficult to rule them, for theirs is a distant and populous land.

κατορθώσας μὴ ἐν τῷ ὁμοίῳ καὶ πρὶν ἐπιχειρῆσαι ἔσται. Σικελιῶται δ᾽ ἄν μοι δοκοῦσιν, ὥς γε νῦν ἔχουσι, καὶ ἔτι ἂν ἧσσον δεινοὶ ἡμῖν γενέσθαι, εἰ ἄρξειαν αὐτῶν Συρακόσιοι, ὅπερ οἱ Ἐγεσταῖοι μάλιστα ἡμᾶς ἐκφοβοῦσιν. νῦν μὲν γὰρ κἂν ἔλθοιεν ἴσως Λακεδαιμονίων ἕκαστοι χάριτι, ἐκείνως δ᾽ οὐκ εἰκὸς ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ ἀρχὴν στρατεῦσαι· ᾧ γὰρ ἂν τρόπῳ τὴν ἡμετέραν μετὰ Πελοποννησίων ἀφέλωνται, εἰκὸς ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν σφετέραν διὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαιρεθῆναι. ἡμᾶς δ᾽ ἂν οἱ ἐκεῖ Ἕλληνες μάλιστα μὲν ἐκπεπληγμένοι εἶεν, εἰ μὴ ἀφικοίμεθα, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ εἰ δείξαντες τὴν δύναμιν δι᾽ ὀλίγου ἀπέλθοιμεν (τὰ γὰρ διὰ πλείστου πάντες ἴσμεν θαυμαζόμενα καὶ τὰ πεῖραν ἥκιστα τῆς δόξης δόντα)· εἰ δὲ σφαλεῖμέν τι, τάχιστ᾽ ἂν ὑπεριδόντες μετὰ τῶν ἐνθάδε ἐπίθοιντο.

Ὅπερ νῦν ὑμεῖς, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, ἐς Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους πεπόνθατε, διὰ τὸ παρὰ γνώμην αὐτῶν πρὸς ἃ ἐφοβεῖσθε τὸ πρῶτον περιγεγενῆσθαι καταφρονήσαντες ἤδη καὶ

It will be senseless to conquer them if we cannot control them afterwards and a failed attempt would leave us in a much worse position than before. As things stand, I think the Sicilians would present even less of a challenge if they were all under Syracuse's sway, despite the Segesteans' efforts to frighten us with that prospect. Right now, certain Sicilians might be inclined to sail here to help the Spartans, but if they were governed by Syracuse it seems unlikely that the one empire would want to attack the other. After all, if they were to join the Peloponnesians in dismantling our empire, sooner or later the Peloponnesians would most likely do the same to them for that very reason. What would most shock the Sicilian Greeks would be for us not to go there at all; what would shock them most after that would be for us to go, make a quick show of our strength, and then leave. We all know that people tend to

Σικελίας ἐφίεσθε. χρὴ δὲ μὴ πρὸς τὰς τύχας τῶν ἐναντίων ἐπαίρεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὰς διανοίας κρατήσαντας θαρσεῖν, μηδὲ Λακεδαιμονίους ἄλλο τι ἡγήσασθαι ἢ διὰ τὸ αἰσχρὸν σκοπεῖν ὅτῳ τρόπῳ ἔτι καὶ νῦν, ἢν δύνωνται, σφήλαντες ἡμᾶς τὸ σφέτερον ἀπρεπὲς εὖ θήσονται, ὅσῳ καὶ περὶ πλείστου καὶ διὰ πλείστου δόξαν ἀρετῆς μελετῶσιν. ὥστε οὐ περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ Ἐγεσταίων ἡμῖν, ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων, ὁ ἀγών, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως πόλιν δι᾽ ὀλιγαρχίας ἐπιβουλεύουσαν ὀξέως φυλαξόμεθα.

admire what is most distant and least tested, but if we were to make any error they would quickly develop contempt for us and join the Spartans here.

That, Athenians, is precisely what we have experienced in our dealings with Sparta and its allies. Though you were initially apprehensive, your victories against them came so easily that your fear has turned to scorn and now you set your sights on Sicily. We should not be so buoyed by our enemies' failures but must keep that kind of confidence at bay until they have truly reconciled themselves to defeat. Because of their recent embarrassments, the Spartans now think of nothing except how they might still—if indeed they can—get the better of us and reverse their humiliation, for their culture has always put an absolute premium on military glory.[5] All of this means that, if we have any sense, we will realize that the conflict actually

[12] Καὶ μεμνῆσθαι χρὴ ἡμᾶς ὅτι νεωστὶ ἀπὸ νόσου μεγάλης καὶ πολέμου βραχύ τι λελωφήκαμεν, ὥστε καὶ χρήμασι καὶ τοῖς σώμασιν ηὐξῆσθαι· καὶ ταῦτα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δίκαιον ἐνθάδε ἀναλοῦν, καὶ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἀνδρῶν φυγάδων τῶνδε ἐπικουρίας δεομένων, οἷς τό τε ψεύσασθαι καλῶς χρήσιμον, καὶ τῷ τοῦ πέλας κινδύνῳ, αὐτοὺς λόγους μόνον παρασχομένους, ἢ κατορθώσαντας χάριν μὴ ἀξίαν εἰδέναι ἢ πταίσαντάς που τοὺς φίλους ξυναπολέσαι.

Εἴ τέ τις ἄρχειν ἄσμενος αἱρεθεὶς παραινεῖ ὑμῖν ἐκπλεῖν, τὸ ἑαυτοῦ μόνον σκοπῶν, ἄλλως τε καὶ νεώτερος ὢν ἔτι ἐς τὸ ἄρχειν, ὅπως θαυμασθῇ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ἱπποτροφίας, διὰ δὲ πολυτέλειαν καὶ ὠφεληθῇ τι ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς, μηδὲ τούτῳ

has nothing to do with the Segesteans in Sicily, a barbarian people. This is about vigorously defending ourselves from another city's oligarchic schemes.

[12] You must also bear in mind that we are only now starting to recover from a devastating plague and period of war and to rebuild our economy and population. We should be putting those resources to use for ourselves here at home and not squandering them on these Segestean exiles who have come begging for aid and in whose interest it is to tell convincing lies at others' risk, but who have nothing to contribute but speeches. If we save them they will be ungrateful, and if they fail they will be perfectly happy to see their friends go down with them.

Perhaps there is someone here who is thrilled to have been chosen to lead this expedition and who is therefore urging you to set sail with

ἐμπαράσχητε τῷ τῆς πόλεως κινδύνῳ ἰδίᾳ ἐλλαμπρύνεσθαι, νομίσατε δὲ τοὺς τοιούτους τὰ μὲν δημόσια ἀδικεῖν, τὰ δὲ ἴδια ἀναλοῦν, καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα μέγα εἶναι καὶ μὴ οἷον νεωτέρῳ βουλεύσασθαί τε καὶ ὀξέως μεταχειρίσαι.

[13] Οὓς ἐγὼ ὁρῶν νῦν ἐνθάδε τῷ αὐτῷ ἀνδρὶ παρακελευστοὺς καθημένους φοβοῦμαι, καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἀντιπαρακελεύομαι μὴ καταισχυνθῆναι, εἴ τῳ τις παρακάθηται τῶνδε, ὅπως μὴ δόξει, ἂν μὴ ψηφίζηται πολεμεῖν, μαλακὸς εἶναι, μηδ', ὅπερ ἂν αὐτοὶ πάθοιεν,

thoughts of only himself. Perhaps he is all the more eager because he is so young for the role. He may wish to be admired for the stables he keeps, but still he knows that horse-breeding is an expensive hobby and hopes to profit from his command. If that is the case, do not endanger the city by entrusting him with this responsibility just so he can win glory for himself. Remember that these kinds of people harm the community even as they squander their own estates, and this is too important a matter for someone so young to decide and to undertake so rashly.

[13] I am alarmed at the sight of all the friends this man has rallied to accompany him here and I will respond by making an appeal to the older citizens among us. If you happen to be sitting next to one of his supporters, do not let him shame you into voting to go to war just to avoid

δυσέρωτας εἶναι τῶν ἀπόντων, γνόντας ὅτι ἐπιθυμίᾳ μὲν ἐλάχιστα κατορθοῦνται, προνοίᾳ δὲ πλεῖστα, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος, ὡς μέγιστον δὴ τῶν πρὶν κίνδυνον ἀναρριπτούσης, ἀντιχειροτονεῖν καὶ ψηφίζεσθαι τοὺς μὲν Σικελιώτας οἷσπερ νῦν ὅροις χρωμένους πρὸς ἡμᾶς, οὐ μεμπτοῖς, τῷ τε Ἰονίῳ κόλπῳ, παρὰ γῆν ἥν τις πλεῃ, καὶ τῷ Σικελικῷ, διὰ πελάγους, τὰ αὑτῶν νεμομένους καθ᾽ αὑτοὺς καὶ ξυμφέρεσθαι· τοῖς δὲ Ἐγεσταίοις ἰδίᾳ εἰπεῖν, ἐπειδὴ ἄνευ Ἀθηναίων καὶ ξυνῆψαν πρὸς Σελινουντίους τὸ πρῶτον πόλεμον, μετὰ σφῶν αὐτῶν καὶ καταλύεσθαι· καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ξυμμάχους μὴ ποιεῖσθαι, ὥσπερ εἰώθαμεν, οἷς κακῶς μὲν πράξασιν ἀμυνοῦμεν, ὠφελίας δ᾽ αὐτοὶ δεηθέντες οὐ τευξόμεθα.

looking weak. Do not, like them, be infatuated with mirages. Understand that hardly anything is achieved by desire alone but that prudence often accomplishes great things. Our fatherland is teetering toward the greatest danger it has ever known and I therefore urge you to vote against this expedition. Vote to let the Sicilians manage matters within the borders (perfectly acceptable ones) that divide their territory from ours: the Ionian Sea if the voyage is along the coast and the Sicilian Sea if the journey is over open water. Make your decision to leave them to handle their own affairs and resolve things on their own, and tell the Segesteans the same: that they began their war against the Selinuntines with no help from Athens and it is now up to them to settle it. Going forward, we have to avoid the habit of making allies who rely on us to solve their problems but who are useless if we need help from them.

[14] Καὶ σύ, ὦ πρύτανι, ταῦτα, εἴπερ ἡγεῖ σοι προσήκειν κήδεσθαί τε τῆς πόλεως καὶ βούλει γενέσθαι πολίτης ἀγαθός, ἐπιψήφιζε καὶ γνώμας προτίθει αὖθις Ἀθηναίοις, νομίσας, εἰ ὀρρωδεῖς τὸ ἀναψηφίσαι, τὸ μὲν λύειν τοὺς νόμους μὴ μετὰ τοσῶνδ᾽ ἂν μαρτύρων αἰτίαν σχεῖν, τῆς δὲ πόλεως βουλευσαμένης ἰατρὸς ἂν γενέσθαι, καὶ τὸ καλῶς ἄρξαι τοῦτ᾽ εἶναι, ὃς ἂν τὴν πατρίδα ὠφελήσῃ ὡς πλεῖστα ἢ ἑκὼν εἶναι μηδὲν βλάψῃ.

[15] *Ὁ μὲν Νικίας τοιαῦτα εἶπεν· τῶν δὲ Ἀθηναίων παριόντες οἱ μὲν πλεῖστοι στρατεύειν παρῄνουν καὶ τὰ ἐψηφισμένα μὴ λύειν, οἱ δέ τινες καὶ ἀντέλεγον. ἐνῆγε δὲ προθυμότατα τὴν στρατείαν Ἀλκιβιάδης ὁ Κλεινίου, βουλόμενος τῷ τε Νικίᾳ ἐναντιοῦσθαι, ὢν καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα διάφορος τὰ πολιτικὰ καὶ ὅτι αὐτοῦ διαβόλως*

[14] I therefore urge you, Mr. Chairman—if you think it your task to see to the city's well-being and hope to serve this assembly as a dutiful citizen—to call a second vote and put the matter once more to the Athenians. If you are hesitant for us to vote again, just think that you cannot be blamed for breaking the laws when you have so many witnesses. You will be playing the role of physician attending to an errant city, and that is what leadership is: a leader wishes to help his fatherland as much as he can, or at least is committed to "do no harm."

[15] *That, more or less, was what Nicias said. Most of the Athenians who spoke after him were in favor of the expedition and opposed to another vote, though a few did speak to the contrary. The person who advocated most passionately for the expedition was Alcibiades, the son of Cleinias, who sought to oppose Nicias not only*

ἐμνήσθη, καὶ μάλιστα στρατηγῆσαί τε ἐπιθυμῶν καὶ ἐλπίζων Σικελίαν τε δι᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ Καρχηδόνα λήψεσθαι καὶ τὰ ἴδια ἅμα εὐτυχήσας χρήμασί τε καὶ δόξῃ ὠφελήσειν. ὢν γὰρ ἐν ἀξιώματι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀστῶν, ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις μείζοσιν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν ἐχρῆτο ἔς τε τὰς ἱπποτροφίας καὶ τὰς ἄλλας δαπάνας· ὅπερ καὶ καθεῖλεν ὕστερον τὴν τῶν Ἀθηναίων πόλιν οὐχ ἥκιστα. φοβηθέντες γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς τε κατὰ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα παρανομίας ἐς τὴν δίαιταν καὶ τῆς διανοίας ὧν καθ᾽ ἕν ἕκαστον ἐν ὅτῳ γίγνοιτο ἔπρασσεν, ὡς τυραννίδος ἐπιθυμοῦντι πολέμιοι καθέστασαν, καὶ δημοσίᾳ κράτιστα διαθέντι τὰ τοῦ πολέμου ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστοι τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν αὐτοῦ ἀχθεσθέντες καὶ ἄλλοις ἐπιτρέψαντες οὐ διὰ μακροῦ ἔσφηλαν τὴν πόλιν. τότε δ᾽ οὖν παρελθὼν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις παρῄνει τοιάδε.

on account of his opposing political views but also because he could not forget Nicias' disparagements. Alcibiades wanted more than anything to lead the expedition and hoped that under his leadership Sicily and Carthage would be conquered and the victory would bring him fame and fortune. He was already something of a celebrity, but his passions for horse-breeding and other luxuries exceeded the means at his disposal. In the end, that is why he was largely responsible for Athens' downfall. The people feared him for the extremes of his hedonism and for the spirit that guided everything he did and eventually turned on him because they suspected him of tyrannical aspirations. As a public figure he was unrivaled in matters of war, but everyone became so personally exasperated by his conduct that they looked to others for leadership—and in doing so caused the city's

[16] Καὶ προσήκει μοι μᾶλλον ἑτέρων, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, ἄρχειν (ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἐντεῦθεν ἄρξασθαι, ἐπειδή μου Νικίας καθήψατο), καὶ ἄξιος ἅμα νομίζω εἶναι. ὧν γὰρ πέρι ἐπιβόητός εἰμι, τοῖς μὲν προγόνοις μου καὶ ἐμοὶ δόξαν φέρει ταῦτα, τῇ δὲ πατρίδι καὶ ὠφελίαν. οἱ γὰρ Ἕλληνες καὶ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν μείζω ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν ἐνόμισαν τῷ ἐμῷ διαπρεπεῖ τῆς Ὀλυμπίαζε θεωρίας, πρότερον ἐλπίζοντες αὐτὴν καταπεπολεμῆσθαι, διότι ἅρματα μὲν ἑπτὰ καθῆκα, ὅσα οὐδείς πω ἰδιώτης πρότερον, ἐνίκησα δὲ καὶ δεύτερος καὶ τέταρτος ἐγενόμην καὶ τἆλλα ἀξίως τῆς νίκης παρεσκευασάμην. νόμῳ μὲν γὰρ τιμὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δρωμένου καὶ δύναμις ἅμα ὑπονοεῖται. καὶ ὅσα αὖ ἐν τῇ πόλει χορηγίαις ἢ ἄλλῳ τῳ λαμπρύνομαι, τοῖς μὲν ἀστοῖς φθονεῖται φύσει,

ruin. On this occasion, though, Alcibiades came forward and advised the Athenians as follows:

[16] Athenians, I am the best man to lead this expedition (I have to begin there, in light of Nicias' attacks) and I also think I deserve to. Everything that I am being vilified for is, in reality, a credit to both my ancestors and me and an asset to this country. The other Greeks had assumed that our city was debilitated by war, but when they saw my splendid showing at Olympia they drew the conclusion that Athens is stronger than it actually is. That is because I entered seven chariots in the races—more than any private citizen in history. I won and also placed second and fourth, and made every effort to put on a display worthy of my victory. Honor is typically the prize in these sorts of contests but the accomplishment is also suggestive of power. Likewise, whenever I distinguish

πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ξένους καὶ αὕτη ἰσχὺς φαίνεται. καὶ οὐκ ἄχρηστος ἥδ᾽ ἡ ἄνοια, ὃς ἂν τοῖς ἰδίοις τέλεσι μὴ ἑαυτὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὠφελῇ, οὐδέ γε ἄδικον ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτῷ μέγα φρονοῦντα μὴ ἴσον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ κακῶς πράσσων πρὸς οὐδένα τῆς ξυμφορᾶς ἰσομοιρεῖ· ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ δυστυχοῦντες οὐ προσαγορευόμεθα, ἐν τῷ ὁμοίῳ τις ἀνεχέσθω καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν εὐπραγούντων ὑπερφρονούμενος, ἢ τὰ ἴσα νέμων τὰ ὁμοῖα ἀνταξιούτω.

Οἶδα δὲ τοὺς τοιούτους, καὶ ὅσοι ἔν τινος λαμπρότητι προέσχον, ἐν μὲν τῷ κατ᾽ αὐτοὺς βίῳ λυπηροὺς ὄντας, τοῖς ὁμοίοις μὲν μάλιστα, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυνόντας, τῶν δὲ ἔπειτα ἀνθρώπων προσποίησίν τε ξυγγενείας τισὶ καὶ μὴ οὖσαν καταλιπόντας, καὶ ἧς ἂν ὦσι πατρίδος, ταύτῃ αὔχησιν, ὡς οὐ περὶ ἀλλοτρίων οὐδ᾽ ἁμαρτόντων, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς περὶ σφετέρων τε καὶ καλὰ πραξάντων. ὧν ἐγὼ ὀρεγόμενος καὶ διὰ ταῦτα τὰ ἴδια ἐπιβοώμενος τὰ δημόσια σκοπεῖτε εἴ του χεῖρον μεταχειρίζω. Πελοποννήσου γὰρ τὰ

myself in Athens by paying for choruses or the like, the people are naturally jealous—but the city appears mighty in foreigners' eyes. It is hardly a senseless waste when a man's private outlay serves not just his own interests but his city's as well. There is, moreover, nothing wrong with elites demanding special treatment; after all, less fortunate people avoid imposing their troubles on others. We hardly expect to be showered with attention when we are down on our luck, so by the same logic why should it bother people if their superiors disdain them? You can only demand equal respect if you give it.

I realize that men like this, men who outshine others with a special brilliance, irritate other people—their peers most of all, but really anyone they interact with—during their own lifetimes. Yet they also bequeath subsequent generations with an urge to claim them as

δυνατώτατα ξυστήσας ἄνευ μεγάλου ὑμῖν κινδύνου καὶ δαπάνης Λακεδαιμονίους ἐς μίαν ἡμέραν κατέστησα ἐν Μαντινείᾳ περὶ τῶν ἁπάντων ἀγωνίσασθαι· ἐξ οὗ καὶ περιγενόμενοι τῇ μάχῃ οὐδέπω καὶ νῦν βεβαίως θαρσοῦσιν.

[17] Καὶ ταῦτα ἡ ἐμὴ νεότης καὶ ἄνοια παρὰ φύσιν δοκοῦσα εἶναι ἐς τὴν Πελοποννησίων

ancestors, regardless of whether those claims are true. Their fatherlands eventually boast of them and no longer paint them as foreign and villainous but as native sons who accomplished remarkable things. I very much hope that this will happen for me, seeing as it is why I am so publicly denounced for my private life. What you really need to consider is whether there is anyone better than I am at handling public affairs. After all, I was the one who formed the coalition of the most powerful cities of the Peloponnese at no great risk or expense to yourselves. I was the one who drove the Spartans to stake everything they had on a single day in Mantinea. They might have won the battle, but even today they lack the bold confidence they had before.

[17] So, despite my young age and my alleged astonishing recklessness my words won over

δύναμιν λόγοις τε πρέπουσιν ὡμίλησε καὶ ὀργῇ πίστιν παρασχομένῃ ἔπεισε· καὶ νῦν μὴ πεφόβησθε αὐτήν, ἀλλ᾽ ἕως ἐγώ τε ἔτι ἀκμάζω μετ᾽ αὐτῆς καὶ ὁ Νικίας εὐτυχὴς δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀποχρήσασθε τῇ ἑκατέρου ἡμῶν ὠφελίᾳ. καὶ τὸν ἐς τὴν Σικελίαν πλοῦν μὴ μεταγιγνώσκετε ὡς ἐπὶ μεγάλην δύναμιν ἐσόμενον. ὄχλοις τε γὰρ ξυμμείκτοις πολυανδροῦσιν αἱ πόλεις καὶ ῥᾳδίας ἔχουσι τῶν πολιτῶν τὰς μεταβολὰς καὶ ἐπιδοχάς· καὶ οὐδεὶς δι᾽ αὐτὸ ὡς περὶ οἰκείας πατρίδος οὔτε τὰ περὶ τὸ σῶμα ὅπλοις ἐξήρτυται οὔτε τὰ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ μονίμοις κατασκευαῖς, ὅ τι δὲ ἕκαστος ἢ ἐκ τοῦ λέγων πείθειν οἴεται ἢ στασιάζων ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ λαβὼν ἄλλην γῆν, μὴ κατορθώσας, οἰκήσειν, ταῦτα ἑτοιμάζεται.

Καὶ οὐκ εἰκὸς τὸν τοιοῦτον ὅμιλον οὔτε λόγου μιᾷ γνώμῃ ἀκροᾶσθαι οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἔργα κοινῶς τρέπεσθαι· ταχὺ δ᾽ ἂν ὡς ἕκαστοι, εἴ τι καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν λέγοιτο, προσχωροῖεν, ἄλλως τε καὶ εἰ

the entire Peloponnesian force and my passion persuaded them to trust me. Do not, then, be frightened by my youth. As long as I remain at its peak and Nicias is still successful, you should be harnessing these qualities to the best of your advantage. Do not, moreover, change your minds about sailing to Sicily because of the size of the force there. These are cities that teem with diverse populations; whose citizen bodies undergo constant changes and new additions. Nobody, then, feels like they are fighting for their own fatherland. The soldiers, moreover, lack adequate armor and the territory lacks regular defenses. Everybody there thinks that they can acquire more land simply by giving a good speech or by setting themselves at odds with the community and when their plans fail they are always prepared to up and move somewhere else.

στασιάζουσιν, ὥσπερ πυνθανόμεθα. καὶ μὴν οὐδ᾽ ὁπλῖται οὔτ᾽ ἐκείνοις ὅσοιπερ κομποῦνται, οὔτε οἱ ἄλλοι Ἕλληνες διεφάνησαν τοσοῦτοι ὄντες ὅσους ἕκαστοι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἠρίθμουν, ἀλλὰ μέγιστον δὴ αὐτοὺς ἐψευσμένη ἡ Ἑλλὰς μόλις ἐν τῷδε τῷ πολέμῳ ἱκανῶς ὡπλίσθη.

Τά τε οὖν ἐκεῖ ἐξ ὧν ἐγὼ ἀκοῇ αἰσθάνομαι τοιαῦτα καὶ ἔτι εὐπορώτερα ἔσται (βαρβάρους γὰρ πολλοὺς ἕξομεν οἳ Συρακοσίων μίσει ξυνεπιθήσονται αὐτοῖς), καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε οὐκ ἐπικωλύσει, ἢν ὑμεῖς ὀρθῶς βουλεύησθε. οἱ γὰρ πατέρες ἡμῶν τοὺς αὐτοὺς τούτους οὕσπερ νῦν φασι πολεμίους ὑπολιπόντας ἂν ἡμᾶς πλεῖν καὶ προσέτι τὸν Μῆδον ἐχθρὸν ἔχοντες τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκτήσαντο, οὐκ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἢ τῇ περιουσίᾳ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἰσχύοντες. καὶ νῦν οὔτε ἀνέλπιστοί πω μᾶλλον Πελοποννήσιοι ἐς ἡμᾶς ἐγένοντο, εἴ τε καὶ πάνυ ἔρρωνται, τὸ μὲν ἐς τὴν γῆν ἡμῶν ἐσβάλλειν, κἂν μὴ ἐκπλεύσωμεν, ἱκανοί εἰσι, τῷ δὲ ναυτικῷ οὐκ ἂν δύναιντο βλάπτειν· ὑπόλοιπον γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστιν ἀντίπαλον ναυτικόν.

It is highly unlikely that this mass of people will have the same reaction to any speech they hear or be able to pull off a coordinated effort. Each man is for himself over there and they are all just as quick to ally with anyone who gives an appealing speech as they are to quarrel, especially if there is the internal strife that we believe there to be. As to actual hoplites, their boasts far exceed the reality—just like the other Greek states, which time and again have exaggerated the number of their troops. In fact, on this point Greece has proven immensely disingenuous, seeing as it has barely been able to muster adequate numbers for the present war.

This, then, is, from what I hear, how things stand over there. What is more, if you consider how many non-Greeks will join our assault simply out of hatred for Syracuse, circumstances are probably even more favorable than I have made them out to be. On the other hand, there is

[18] Ὥστε τί ἂν λέγοντες εἰκὸς ἢ αὐτοὶ ἀποκνοῖμεν ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ἐκεῖ ξυμμάχους σκηπτόμενοι μὴ βοηθοῖμεν; οἷς χρεών, ἐπειδή γε καὶ ξυνωμόσαμεν, ἐπαμύνειν καὶ μὴ ἀντιτιθέναι ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἡμῖν. οὐ γὰρ ἵνα

nothing here that should hold us back provided you are careful about your decisions. Our fathers had to deal with the very same enemies that these people claim we will leave behind if we sail, and had the Persians to reckon with on top of that. Yet they managed to build this empire when they were nothing but a naval power. The Peloponnesians' struggle against us has never been as hopeless as it is now, but if they do recover their strength they could invade us by land regardless of whether we make this expedition. And if we do make it, they will still be powerless to harm our navy because whatever fraction of it we leave behind will still be a match for theirs.

[18] What reason, then, could we possibly give for our own hesitation, or for having second thoughts about aiding our allies? We have to help them because we swore that we would, and it is no excuse for us to say that they have never

δεῦρο ἀντιβοηθῶσι προσεθέμεθα αὐτούς, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα τοῖς ἐκεῖ ἐχθροῖς ἡμῶν λυπηροὶ ὄντες δεῦρο κωλύωσιν αὐτοὺς ἐπιέναι. τήν τε ἀρχὴν οὕτως ἐκτησάμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ ὅσοι δὴ ἄλλοι ἦρξαν, παραγιγνόμενοι προθύμως τοῖς αἰεὶ ἢ βαρβάροις ἢ Ἕλλησιν ἐπικαλουμένοις, ἐπεί, εἴ γε ἡσυχάζοιμεν πάντες ἢ φυλοκρινοῖμεν οἷς χρεὼν βοηθεῖν, βραχὺ ἄν τι προσκτώμενοι αὐτῇ περὶ αὐτῆς ἂν ταύτης μᾶλλον κινδυνεύοιμεν.

Τὸν γὰρ προύχοντα οὐ μόνον ἐπιόντα τις ἀμύνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅπως μὴ ἔπεισι προκαταλαμβάνει. καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ταμιεύεσθαι ἐς ὅσον βουλόμεθα ἄρχειν, ἀλλὰ ἀνάγκη, ἐπειδήπερ ἐν τῷδε καθέσταμεν, τοῖς μὲν ἐπιβουλεύειν, τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἀνιέναι, διὰ τὸ ἀρχθῆναι ἂν ὑφ᾽ ἑτέρων αὐτοῖς κίνδυνον εἶναι, εἰ μὴ αὐτοὶ ἄλλων ἄρχοιμεν. καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐπισκεπτέον ὑμῖν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ ἥσυχον, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἔς τὸ ὁμοῖον μεταλήψεσθε.

done anything to earn it. We did not join forces with them so that they would thank us by helping us here; we made this alliance so that they would make trouble for our enemies over there and keep them from attacking us at home. We built an empire the same way that everyone else has, by gladly lending our support to anyone, Greek or otherwise, who asked for it. So, if we sit idly by, or split hairs over matters of ethnicity in deciding whom to help, it will be a long time before we ever manage to expand our rule. It seems we would rather risk losing it all instead.

Defending yourself is not simply a matter of reacting to attacks already underway; it also means anticipating future attacks and preventing them from happening. We do not simply get to make a calculation as to how large we wish our empire to be. We have to face reality and take it upon ourselves to maneuver in certain

Λογισάμενοι οὖν τάδε μᾶλλον αὐξήσειν, ἐπ᾽ ἐκεῖνα ἢν ἴωμεν, ποιώμεθα τὸν πλοῦν, ἵνα Πελοποννησίων τε στορέσωμεν τὸ φρόνημα, εἰ δόξομεν ὑπεριδόντες τὴν ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἡσυχίαν καὶ ἐπὶ Σικελίαν πλεῦσαι, καὶ ἅμα ἢ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, τῶν ἐκεῖ προσγενομένων, πάσης τῷ εἰκότι ἄρξωμεν, ἢ κακώσωμέν γε Συρακοσίους, ἐν ᾧ καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι ὠφελησόμεθα. τὸ δὲ ἀσφαλές, καὶ μένειν, ἤν τι προχωρῇ, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν, αἱ νῆες παρέξουσιν· ναυκράτορες γὰρ ἐσόμεθα καὶ ξυμπάντων Σικελιωτῶν.

Καὶ μὴ ὑμᾶς ἡ Νικίου τῶν λόγων ἀπραγμοσύνη καὶ διάστασις τοῖς νέοις ἐς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἀποτρέψῃ, τῷ δὲ εἰωθότι κόσμῳ, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἅμα νέοι γεραιτέροις βουλεύοντες ἐς τάδε ἦραν αὐτά, καὶ νῦν τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ πειρᾶσθε προαγαγεῖν τὴν πόλιν, καὶ νομίσατε νεότητα μὲν καὶ γῆρας ἄνευ ἀλλήλων μηδὲν δύνασθαι, ὁμοῦ δὲ τό τε φαῦλον καὶ τὸ μέσον καὶ

corners and keep a firm grip on others, for we stand to fall under someone else's rule if we fail to exercise our own. Finally, you cannot regard quietude as favorably as others do unless you want to convert to the rest of their ways, too.

Considering that the best bet for improving things here is for us to go there, let us make the expedition, if only so that the Peloponnesians become demoralized when they see that we resented the current tranquility so much that we decided to sail against Sicily. In all probability, with the gains that we make there we will become rulers over the whole of Greece, or at the very least do serious damage to Syracuse, which will be good both for us and for our allies. After the invasion, our ships will protect us regardless of whether things work out and we stay or else decide to leave. And no matter what happens, we will be masters of the Sicilian seas.

τὸ πάνυ ἀκριβὲς ἂν ξυγκραθὲν μάλιστ᾽ ἂν ἰσχύειν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν, ἂν μὲν ἡσυχάζῃ, τρίψεσθαί τε αὐτὴν περὶ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλο τι, καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐγγηράσεσθαι, ἀγωνιζομένην δὲ αἰεὶ προσλήψεσθαί τε τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὸ ἀμύνεσθαι οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ᾽ ἔργῳ μᾶλλον ξύνηθες ἕξειν. παράπαν τε γιγνώσκω πόλιν μὴ ἀπράγμονα τάχιστ᾽ ἄν μοι δοκεῖν ἀπραγμοσύνης μεταβολῇ διαφθαρῆναι, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀσφαλέστατα τούτους οἰκεῖν οἳ ἂν τοῖς παροῦσιν ἤθεσι καὶ νόμοις, ἢν καὶ χείρω ᾖ, ἥκιστα διαφόρως πολιτεύωσιν.

Do not, then, be dissuaded by Nicias' proposal of non-intervention or by the wedge that he is trying to drive between young and old. Try instead to carry the city forward in the usual manner and conduct yourselves like our fathers, who accomplished so much because, as young men, they deliberated these kinds of matters with their elders. Keep in mind that youth and old age are nothing without each other and that the greatest strength lies in a balance of modest, middling, and elite. Think too that the city, like anything else, will naturally deteriorate if it is not put to good use and that all of the knowledge it has acquired over the years will quickly become obsolete. If it constantly struggles to add to its experience, however, it will develop a habit of defending itself not just with words but with actions. My point is that I know that a city unused to inaction begins to fall apart the moment it becomes

[19] *Τοιαῦτα δὲ ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης εἶπεν. οἱ δ' Ἀθηναῖοι ἀκούσαντες ἐκείνου τε καὶ τῶν Ἐγεσταίων καὶ Λεοντίνων φυγάδων, οἳ παρελθόντες ἐδέοντό τε καὶ τῶν ὁρκίων ὑπομιμνήσκοντες ἱκέτευον βοηθῆσαι σφίσι, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον ὥρμηντο στρατεύειν. καὶ ὁ Νικίας γνοὺς ὅτι ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ἀποτρέψειε, παρασκευῆς δὲ πλήθει, εἰ πολλὴν ἐπιτάξειε, τάχ' ἂν μεταστήσειεν αὐτούς, παρελθὼν αὐτοῖς αὖθις ἔλεγε τοιάδε.*

[20] Ἐπειδὴ πάντως ὁρῶ ὑμᾶς, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, ὡρμημένους στρατεύειν, ξυνενέγκοι μὲν ταῦτα ὡς βουλόμεθα, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ παρόντι ἃ γιγνώσκω

inactive, and that the safest route is for its people to stay true to their customs and institutions—however flawed they might be—and to avoid at all costs any attempt to do things differently.

[19] *That, more or less, was what Alcibiades said. When the Athenians had heard his case and also listened to that of the Segestean and Leontinean exiles, who pleaded that Athens remember its oaths and begged for the people's assistance, many of them grew even more eager than before to launch the expedition. Nicias now realized there was no hope of changing their minds but still he thought that he might put them off by insisting on an enormous force. He therefore came forward and said the following:*

[20] Well then, Athenians, I see that you have your hearts set on the invasion—may it turn out as well as we hope. In that case I will tell you

σημανῶ. ἐπὶ γὰρ πόλεις, ὡς ἐγὼ ἀκοῇ αἰσθάνομαι, μέλλομεν ἰέναι μεγάλας καὶ οὔθ᾽ ὑπηκόους ἀλλήλων οὐδὲ δεομένας μεταβολῆς, ᾗ ἂν ἐκ βιαίου τις δουλείας ἄσμενος ἐς ῥᾴω μετάστασιν χωροίη, οὔτ᾽ ἂν τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν ἡμετέραν εἰκότως ἀντ᾽ ἐλευθερίας προσδεξαμένας, τό τε πλῆθος, ὡς ἐν μιᾷ νήσῳ, πολλὰς τὰς Ἑλληνίδας. πλὴν γὰρ Νάξου καὶ Κατάνης, ἃς ἐλπίζω ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸ Λεοντίνων ξυγγενὲς προσέσεσθαι, ἄλλαι εἰσὶν ἑπτά, καὶ παρεσκευασμέναι τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοιοτρόπως μάλιστα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ δυνάμει, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα ἐπὶ ἃς μᾶλλον πλέομεν, Σελινοῦς καὶ Συράκουσαι. πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ὁπλῖται ἔνεισι καὶ τοξόται καὶ ἀκοντισταί, πολλαὶ δὲ τριήρεις καὶ ὄχλος ὁ πληρώσων αὐτάς. χρήματά τ᾽ ἔχουσι, τὰ μὲν ἴδια, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἔστι Σελινουντίοις· Συρακοσίοις δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ βαρβάρων τινῶν ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς φέρεται. ᾧ δὲ μάλιστα ἡμῶν προύχουσιν, ἵππους τε πολλοὺς κέκτηνται καὶ σίτῳ οἰκείῳ καὶ οὐκ ἐπακτῷ χρῶνται.

my opinion in light of the present situation. We are about to attack cities which are very large (or so I hear) and which are neither subject to one another nor desirous of constitutional change: we are not talking about people longing to escape forced enslavement in exchange for a less oppressive regime. Nor is it likely that our empire will be received as a welcome replacement for freedom. There are, moreover, many Greek cities on that one single island. Apart from Naxos and Catania, which I hope will join us because of their ethnic ties to the Leontineans, seven other cities are all equipped with forces equivalent to our own. This is particularly true of the ones that we plan to attack most aggressively, Selinunte and Syracuse. They have plenty of hoplites, archers, and spearmen; a great deal of triremes; and population enough to man the ships. They also have plenty of private wealth, while the Selinuntines' temples are

[21] Πρὸς οὖν τοιαύτην δύναμιν οὐ ναυτικῆς καὶ φαύλου στρατιᾶς μόνον δεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεζὸν πολὺν ξυμπλεῖν, εἴπερ βουλόμεθα ἄξιον τῆς διανοίας δρᾶν καὶ μὴ ὑπὸ ἱππέων πολλῶν εἴργεσθαι τῆς γῆς, ἄλλως τε καὶ εἰ ξυστῶσιν αἱ πόλεις φοβηθεῖσαι καὶ μὴ ἀντιπαράσχωσιν ἡμῖν φίλοι τινὲς γενόμενοι ἄλλοι ἢ Ἐγεσταῖοι ᾧ ἀμυνούμεθα ἱππικόν· αἰσχρὸν δὲ βιασθέντας ἀπελθεῖν ἢ ὕστερον ἐπιμεταπέμπεσθαι τὸ πρῶτον ἀσκέπτως βουλευσαμένους. αὐτόθεν δὲ παρασκευῇ ἀξιόχρεῳ ἐπιέναι, γνόντας ὅτι πολύ τε ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας αὐτῶν μέλλομεν πλεῖν καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὁμοίῳ στρατευσόμενοι καὶ εἰ τοῖς τῇδε ὑπηκόοις ξύμμαχοι ἥλθετε ἐπί τινα, ὅθεν ῥᾴδιαι

rich and the Syracusans collect tribute from various barbarian peoples. And then there are the points on which they enjoy the advantage: they have a ready supply of horses and do not import grain because they grow enough of it there.

[21] Against those kinds of odds a fleet and small army will not suffice. We need a full complement of infantry if we wish to follow through on our goals and avoid being blocked on the ground by their horsemen, particularly if fear drives these cities to band together and we are left to resist the cavalry with no allies but the Segesteans. It would be an embarrassment if we were forced to retreat and launch the attack again simply because we had been careless in our initial planning. Right from the start, then, we need to assemble a force that is equal to this fight and be cognizant of the fact that we are about to sail very far from our own country.

αἱ κομιδαὶ ἐκ τῆς φιλίας ὧν προσέδει, ἀλλὰ ἐς ἀλλοτρίαν πᾶσαν ἀπαρτήσαντες, ἐξ ἧς μηνῶν οὐδὲ τεσσάρων τῶν χειμερινῶν ἄγγελον ῥᾴδιον ἐλθεῖν.

[22] Ὁπλίτας τε οὖν πολλούς μοι δοκεῖ χρῆναι ἡμᾶς ἄγειν καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων, τῶν τε ὑπηκόων καὶ ἤν τινα ἐκ Πελοποννήσου δυνώμεθα ἢ πεῖσαι ἢ μισθῷ προσαγαγέσθαι, καὶ τοξότας πολλοὺς καὶ σφενδονήτας, ὅπως πρὸς τὸ ἐκείνων ἱππικὸν ἀντέχωσι, ναυσί τε καὶ πολὺ περιεῖναι, ἵνα καὶ τὰ ἐπιτήδεια ῥᾷον ἐσκομιζώμεθα, τὸν δὲ καὶ αὐτόθεν σῖτον ἐν ὁλκάσι, πυροὺς καὶ πεφρυγμένας κριθάς, ἄγειν καὶ σιτοποιοὺς ἐκ τῶν μυλώνων πρὸς μέρος ἠναγκασμένους ἐμμίσθους, ἵνα, ἤν που ὑπὸ

This expedition will bear little resemblance to those we have launched in the past against subject states closer to home, when we could rely on friendly allies in the neighborhood for ready provisions. We are about to cut ourselves off in a wholly foreign land, one so distant that in wintertime it can take more than four months for a messenger just to get here from there.

[22] I therefore think that we need to go in with a great many hoplites, supplied from both our own populations and our allies, as well as men from subject states and anyone we can either persuade or pay to come from the Peloponnese. We also need enough archers and slingers to fend off their cavalry and plenty of ships so that we can convey supplies easily. We will have to bring our own grain, wheat and roasted barley, on supply ships, and distribute paid bakers conscripted from the mills so that,

ἁπλοίας ἀπολαμβανώμεθα, ἔχῃ ἡ στρατιὰ τὰ ἐπιτήδεια (πολλὴ γὰρ οὖσα οὐ πάσης ἔσται πόλεως ὑποδέξασθαι), τά τε ἄλλα ὅσον δυνατὸν ἑτοιμάσασθαι καὶ μὴ ἐπὶ ἑτέροις γίγνεσθαι, μάλιστα δὲ χρήματα αὐτόθεν ὡς πλεῖστα ἔχειν. τὰ δὲ παρ᾽ Ἐγεσταίων, ἃ λέγεται ἐκεῖ ἑτοῖμα, νομίσατε καὶ λόγῳ ἂν μάλιστα ἑτοῖμα εἶναι.

[23] Ἦν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἔλθωμεν ἐνθένδε μὴ ἀντίπαλον μόνον παρασκευασάμενοι, πλήν γε πρὸς τὸ μάχιμον αὐτῶν τὸ ὁπλιτικόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπερβάλλοντες τοῖς πᾶσι, μόλις οὕτως οἷοί τε ἐσόμεθα τῶν μὲν κρατεῖν, τὰ δὲ καὶ διασῶσαι. πόλιν τε νομίσαι χρὴ ἐν ἀλλοφύλοις καὶ πολεμίοις οἰκιοῦντας ἰέναι, οὓς πρέπει τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ ἂν κατάσχωσιν εὐθὺς κρατεῖν τῆς γῆς ἢ εἰδέναι ὅτι, ἢν σφάλλωνται, πάντα πολέμια ἕξουσιν. ὅπερ ἐγὼ φοβούμενος καὶ εἰδὼς πολλὰ μὲν ἡμᾶς δέον

even if our ships are unable to sail, the army will still have enough provisions, for not every local city will be able to host so large a force. We must also take all other necessary steps to ensure that we can be self-sufficient. It will be especially important to take as much money with us as possible; as for all the money allegedly available in Segesta, be sure to put the emphasis on precisely that word: "allegedly."

[23] Even if we set out from here all on our own, though we may manage to muster a force not merely equal to theirs (except in terms of their actual soldiers, the hoplites, with which we cannot compete) but superior in every way, it will still be no easy task to defeat them and return home safely. We have to treat this as if we were headed off to establish a colony in a foreign and enemy land and when that is the case you have either to conquer the territory on

εὖ βουλεύσασθαι, ἔτι δὲ πλείω εὐτυχῆσαι, χαλεπὸν δὲ ἀνθρώπους ὄντας, ὅτι ἐλάχιστα τῇ τύχῃ παραδοὺς ἐμαυτὸν βούλομαι ἐκπλεῖν, παρασκευῇ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰκότων ἀσφαλής. ταῦτα γὰρ τῇ τε ξυμπάσῃ πόλει βεβαιότατα ἡγοῦμαι καὶ ἡμῖν τοῖς στρατευσομένοις σωτήρια. εἰ δέ τῳ ἄλλως δοκεῖ, παρίημι αὐτῷ τὴν ἀρχήν.

[24] *Ὁ μὲν Νικίας τοσαῦτα εἶπε, νομίζων τοὺς Ἀθηναίους τῷ πλήθει τῶν πραγμάτων ἢ ἀποτρέψειν ἤ, εἰ ἀναγκάζοιτο στρατεύεσθαι, μάλιστ' ἂν οὕτως ἀσφαλῶς ἐκπλεῦσαι. οἱ δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦν τοῦ πλοῦ οὐκ ἐξῃρέθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀχλώδους τῆς παρασκευῆς, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον*

the very first day or, failing that, come to grips with the fact that hostility will exist on all sides. With that apprehension in mind, and in the knowledge that we are dependent on good counsel and even more so on good luck (of which we mere mortals have no guarantee), I have no desire to sail off with my fate entrusted to chance but would rather embark in relative safety with a force as fit for the task as possible. I think that this is the surest course of action for the city in general and it will mean our salvation if we do launch this invasion. If anyone has a different opinion, I relinquish my command to him.

[24] *That, more or less, was what Nicias said, in the hopes that either the Athenians would be dissuaded by the magnitude of the force required or, if he should still be made to undertake the mission, this counsel would ensure his safety. Nevertheless, the Athenians lost none of their*

ὥρμηντο καὶ τοὐναντίον περιέστη αὐτῷ· εὖ τε γὰρ παραινέσαι ἔδοξε καὶ ἀσφάλεια νῦν δὴ καὶ πολλὴ ἔσεσθαι. καὶ ἔρως ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι, τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πρεσβυτέροις ὡς ἢ καταστρεψομένοις ἐφ᾽ ἃ ἔπλεον ἢ οὐδὲν ἂν σφαλεῖσαν μεγάλην δύναμιν, τοῖς δ᾽ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ τῆς τε ἀπούσης πόθῳ ὄψεως καὶ θεωρίας, καὶ εὐέλπιδες ὄντες σωθήσεσθαι, ὁ δὲ πολὺς ὅμιλος καὶ στρατιώτης ἔν τε τῷ παρόντι ἀργύριον οἴσειν καὶ προσκτήσεσθαι δύναμιν ὅθεν ἀίδιον μισθοφορὰν ὑπάρξειν. ὥστε διὰ τὴν ἄγαν τῶν πλειόνων ἐπιθυμίαν, εἴ τῳ ἄρα καὶ μὴ ἤρεσκε, δεδιὼς μὴ ἀντιχειροτονῶν κακόνους δόξειεν εἶναι τῇ πόλει ἡσυχίαν ἦγεν.

initial enthusiasm, even when they heard what massive preparations would be required. To the contrary, they grew all the more excited at the prospect and, in the end, did just the opposite of what Nicias had advised. In fact, they thought his admonitions superb and that the complete safety of the enterprise was now assured. A longing to set sail washed over them one and all: the older generation believed they would devastate any territory they invaded, or at least that no harm could ever come to so great a force, while the younger men yearned to leave home to see distant lands and were optimistic about their own safety. As for the ordinary soldier, he saw a promise of immediate pay and a prospect of permanent income. The result of the extreme and excessive enthusiasm was that even those who disapproved of the expedition kept quiet out of fear that a vote against the plan would be taken as proof of their hostility toward the city.

NOTES

Introduction

1 John Adams to John Quincy Adams, 11 August 1777," *Founders Online*, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-02-02-0247.

2 The wording of Polly Low, in her introduction to the edited volume *The Athenian Empire*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008: 5.

3 The phrase is borrowed from the title of a chapter in Nicole Loraux's *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*. New York: Zone Books, 2006 (trans. Alan Sheridan).

4 On these slaves see Paulin Ismard's *Democracy's Slaves: A Political History of Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017 (trans. Janet Marie Todd). On the bureaucracy see J.P. Sickinger's chapter "The

Bureaucracy of Democracy and Empire," in Loren J. Samons II, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Pericles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 196–214.

5 For a recent reappraisal of the source of the funding for the building program, see Lisa Kallet-Marx's article "Did Tribute Fund the Parthenon?" in *Classical Antiquity* 8 (1989): 252–66.

6 See Simon Hornblower's essay "Intellectual Affinities" in Jeffrey S. Rusten, ed., *Thucydides*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009: 191–219 on the lively intellectual and cultural milieu in which Thucydides would have grown up.

7 On the ca. 7th century CE biography of Thucydides, see Timothy Burns' "Marcellinus' *Life of Thucydides*, Translated, with an Introductory Essay," in *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*, 38 (2010): 3–25.

8 For an overview of the signs that the work is incomplete, see Antony Andrewes' essay "Indications of Incompleteness" in A.W. Gomme,

Antony Andrewes, and Kenneth J. Dover, eds. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 5, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981: 361–83.

9 The count of William C. West in "The Speeches of Thucydides: A Description and Listing," in Philip A. Stadter, ed., *The Speeches in Thucydides*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973: 3–15. (Speeches in "indirect discourse" are those reported in the form not of quoted speech but rather, e.g., "Pericles said that . . . and also that . . .".)

10 Emily Greenwood's chapter "Thucydides on the Sicilian Expedition," in Ryan Balot, Sarah Forsdyke, and Edith Foster, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017: 161–77 offers insightful reflections on Thucydides' Athenian bias and the interpretative consequences of his Athenocentric account.

11 Chicago: Rand McNally; quotation from page 139. The book was based on a series of

lectures first delivered at the University of Virginia in 1962.

12 This is the slogan adduced by William Kristol and Robert Kagan in their essay "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Affairs* 75 (1996) 18–32.

13 "The Neoconservative Persuasion," in *The Weekly Standard*, August 25, 2003, https://www.weeklystandard.com/irving-kristol/the-neoconservative-persuasion.

14 The role that Thucydides has played in American foreign policy is as varied and complex as it is exceptional and has now been traced in detail by John A. Bloxham in *Ancient Greece and American Conservatism: Classical Influence on the Modern Right*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2018.

15 Strauss (n.10 above) 141.

16 She introduces the term on p. 1 of *Thucydides, Pericles, and Periclean Imperialism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

17 I am grateful to Edith Foster for pointing this out to me.

18 The wording of C.W. MacLeod in "Form and Meaning in the Melian Dialogue," in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 23 (1974): 385–400.

The Speeches

For my translations I used the Oxford Classical Text edition. The Greek texts provided here are from the Loeb editions.

1 Sparta did send ambassadors back to negotiate in 425, but the Athenians would again refuse to make peace (4.17–20).
2 In this speech of Pericles, I have rendered *politeia* as "institutions" at §36 and as "system of government" at §37.
3 In the 420s, the Spartan general Brasidas had led successful campaigns against certain Athenian allies in Thrace, but left others untouched.
4 At 111.1 I accept Classen's addition of ἡμῖν after γένοιτο.
5 A reference to Sparta's uncharacteristic and shocking surrender to Athens a decade earlier at

the 425 battles of Pylos and Sphacteria (4.3–40; see also the introduction to On Ruthlessness: The Melian Dialogue). Thucydides writes of the surrender that "in the whole course of the war, nothing astonished the Greeks so much as this" (4.40).

FURTHER READING

These suggestions supplement the bibliography given in the notes.

Complete Translations of Thucydides

Translations with an asterisk (*) take a more literal approach to rendering Thucydides' notoriously difficult Greek.

Hammond, Martin. *The Peloponnesian War: Thucydides*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Oxford World's Classics), 2009.

*Lattimore, Steven. *The Peloponnesian War: Thucydides*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.

*Mynott, Jeremy. *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Strassler, Robert B., ed. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. New York: Free Press, 1996. *This edition*

prints a modernized version of Richard Crawley's (1866–1874) translation and is accompanied by helpful maps, text boxes, chronologies, and thematic essays.

Warner, Rex. *Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War.* Revised Edition. New York: Penguin, 1972.

Resources for Reading Thucydides

The two major commentaries on Thucydides in English have much to offer the reader who is not advanced in Ancient Greek:

Gomme, A.W., A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides.* 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945–1981.

Hornblower, Simon. *Commentary on Thucydides.* 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991–2008.

Other Resources

"Attic Inscriptions Online," https://www.atticinscriptions.com. *AIO provides English transla-*

tions of thousands of Attic (i.e., Athenian) inscriptions. These inscriptions can be browsed, sorted, and searched in a variety of ways.

Hornblower, Simon, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, eds. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary. 4th Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. *An extremely useful reference volume with good documentation of primary sources.*

Loeb Classical Library (LCL), Harvard University Press. *Loeb editions of ancient authors provide Greek or Latin texts alongside facing translations, supplemented by introductions and notes. These will be useful for those who wish to consult, for example, Diodorus Siculus*, Library of History, *Books 12–13, on the Peloponnesian War (LCL 375 & 384) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus' essay "On Thucydides"* (*LCL* 465).

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